Trauma Hole

Trauma Hole Theory 12/31/22

nyanakin asked:

> When you rbed my vampire psych post, you tagged something about Armand's "trauma hole." I must know - what *is* Armand's Trauma Hole? Devastate me, Kacy.

I WANNA SAY BEFORE I START btw if I had money and wasn't in the US I'd go to college for psychology strictly to write vampire meta lmfao but yknow what, I don't have a formal education and I just listen to a lot of psych podcasts and I AM, MYSELF, SOMEONE WITH A TRAUMA HOLE so that's my qualifications here LOL.

So I have sort of a running headcanon called The Trauma Hole Theory and like it's not completely solid so don't take my word on this but it's a fun thought experiment.

It comes down to two questions: Do vampires have neuroplasticity? and: Does The Blood know to fix neurological differences? *

*(This point in particular is a whole separate topic because I'd said that the vampires' neurobiology IN ITSELF makes them neurodivergent, as in, operating differently from the average human. But neurodivergence isn't a thing that needs to be healed or cured, simply a difference in structure, but I wonder if The Blood categorizes differences in brain structure due to trauma as an injury?)

And the thing is like, we're never going to have an answer because it's not something Anne planned around. Even like starting with the Mayfair books and going into all her weird cosmic questions in her later life she always talked about biology & medicine like it was magic LOL so who knows. I wish I'd had the chance to ask her this!

But to be more specific, I need to know: Is the Blood able to cure what's wrong with your brain, or does it freeze your brain exactly how it is?

I can make arguments for both because there isn't an answer in canon and if you start fine combing you're going to find a lot of conflicting evidence. We can also handwave this away as "the Dark Gift is different for everyone!"

Claudia is one of my favorite examples to look at, because we have to ask: Is she a monster because she doesn't remember being human or is it because her brain development got frozen where she wasn't awesome at empathy yet? A lot of studies say children have empathy by the time they're 4, so maybe she's in the clear! But how much of her early life and development were stunted by malnourishment?

This also gets into the canon that some of the vampires who were turned younger are a bit wilder, less impulse control, etc. Lestat, as an example of a permanent 20 year old with poor decision making faculties, vs. Marius who although sometimes cruel, has the patience to play the long game. In canon it often gets framed that it's about the deeper experience of being human but I wonder a lot about how it interacts with brain structure. I'd also ask how much of this is simple behavior that they can learn to correct if they want to. Like, is CBT effective for vampires if there's nothing physically wrong with their brains?

(Anyway I need a psych degree to understand more about how brains work and like, the nuances of how undead vampire brains work where they still clearly FUNCTION but like, I need to know which

parts are frozen, how their emotions work, why do they have super photographic memories and telepathy and new powers but we assume their prefrontal cortex is stuck at their mortal age of development how does that affect the overall brain function!?!?! I'm making shit up to fit my angst headcanon needs to don't @ me LOL.) ((Hekate you in particular should weigh in with your headcanons bc you're smarter about this stuff than me!!!!!! I'm just a lowly angst headcanon troll!!!))

So anyway like, trauma causes neurological damage/structural changes to the brain. It reshapes your ability to see logic. I'm sure if you're having sort of acute panic in the moment of being turned, and your amygdala is poppin and your brain is full of cortisol, maybe the Blood takes care of that because it's temporary. But when you look at someone like Armand, who had endured years of trauma before he was turned, I wonder how much of that more complex/long term trauma is just wired into his brain.

SO THE TRAUMA HOLE AND THE QUESTION ABOUT NEUROPLASTICITY IS:

If the Blood fixed Armand's brain where it was, can he ever truly heal from it?

There's a thing in real life with HUMANS recovering from trauma that sometimes we are so unable to accept that Things Are Okay that we're constantly on guard or create problems. If Armand permanently has that space in his head telling him that it's dangerous, that something is wrong, that people are using him; is he always going to find ways to fill that hole and create drama?

Living in squalor for 300 years in a cult felt like a way to stay with this feeling, to not allow himself to even try for safety and happiness. In the Theatre, even trying to be better, he still allowed himself to partake in atrocities.

And with Daniel? Gradually allowing himself to feel things even though he'd been reckless with his pet? But really trying?

Even after finally turning Daniel it became a self-fulfilling prophecy; he believed he wouldn't be a good maker and I have to wonder if he actually tried or if he just allowed that anxiety to dictate his behavior.

In Trinity Gate it's like he's doing his best to be domestic but still takes this role of running the household and keeping everyone safe. He's got these crazy secure crypts in the basement. He's the only one who wants to kill the replimoids.

Marius tells him that he has the ✨savage & ignorant soul of a child✨ AND ?????? HE'S NOT WRONG? EXCEPT IT'S SUCH A SHITTY WAY TO PUT IT. He's just still very much his wounded inner child trying to navigate danger at all times.

CBT could still work on vampires, I think, in terms of teaching them a set of rules to follow. It wouldn't be unlike teaching them to mask. But if it's not something that can be healed, we can always assume that if Armand is behaving, he's just going through the motions for the benefit of the people he loves, and not that he's less hurt and uncomfortable on the inside.

:)

Generational Trauma De Lioncourts 09/25/2022

if I was smarter I'd write a whole thing about generational trauma in the Lioncourt family and how it was passed down from Gabrielle -> Lestat -> Claudia and how Lestat and Claudia both became Oedipal figures in their journeys to become their own people

and it's interesting to ask like when it comes to nature vs nurture and how much generational trauma is genetic vs how much is from learned behavior and like even if Claudia isn't Lestat's daughter the TRADITIONAL WAY she is still his daughter by BLOOD so I wonder like, what that does.

also imagine just like how much of your Maker's trauma you might inherit if it's imprinted into the Blood in any way.

#this is a side tangent about Trauma Hole Vampire Theory like#does your personality leave any type of imprint in the blood or does it know to fix you#i think it can't fix stuff like that though bc all of them are way too fucked up lol

Armand and the Mind Gift 11/09/22

do you ever think about how Armand is exceptionally good at Mind Gifting and cloaking his own thoughts because he was abused his whole life and had to very carefully decide how to express himself while going from one rigid set of rules to the next where his own personality and emotions would not have been valued or allowed?

cause I think about that a lot!!!!!!

#add this to our armand & the trauma hole theory

@hekateinhell YES YES exactly!!

He’s closed himself up TIGHT !

Actually tbh my brain fizzled out in the middle of typing bc I got sad but I also meant to say because a lot of times, people in abusive situations become extremely aware of other people’s emotions around them so that they can react accordingly but it’s so hard to grow out of. Like I hope Armand can learn one day that everyone around him isn’t so dangerous and volatile or that he can create a space (Trinity Gate?) where it’s just not an issue anymore. But you do those things out of protection and I just think he must have been so internal for centuries that it really made him master his skill.

mother wounds & maker wounds ! 02/25/23

So I've talked before about generational trauma with vampires and the nature vs nurture aspect of how some of it is behavior, but how maybe the Blood can create an epigenetic thing too that's just gonna be baked in forever.

BUT LATELY I've been daydreaming a lot about the concept of The Mother Wound and how it applies to vampires!!!! And like when you read about Mother Wounds it's described as generational trauma and it gets brought up a lot that it can be part of family cycles, ie: I raised my child this way because my mom raised me this way, ad infinitum. So I'm interested in looking at like, how the behavior of makers influences their fledglings and what types of assumptions we can make about what it does to you.

And I think if you take any vampire from the books you can kinda ask how it applies, how was their turning traumatic, how did the combination of their deadbeat maker + inherent personality influence their lives and their OWN fledglings. Like, Lestat and Armand for example have extremely different personalities and handled Maker Trauma differently. Lestat continues to breed because he is so desperate for love and afraid of losing people, vs Armand is convinced he'll be a terrible maker and that it isn't worth it to hurt your child, so he doesn't bother. (Except that one time where it became a self-fulfilling prophecy bc he didn't know how to deal with it after.) Armand is completely cynical about the entire concept that you could have a healthy relationship with your maker because he's seen it fall apart at every level, from down in the dregs of existence in the cult beneath the cemetery, the meaningless decadent vampires of the Théâtre who barely understand immortality, and all way the up to the absolute ideal of civility and domestic mainstreaming that he got to experience with Marius.

I just find it wild how like, within VC where we are working with Big Brained Vampire Feelings and relationships that exist outside social constructs because of it, which makes the lines between parent/maker/lover very blurry. The love the vampires have for each other is so all encompassing and bigger than human labels & social roles (ie YOU ARE MY EVERYTHING), and yet as a maker you still have a responsibility to usher your fledgling into immortality in a way that doesn't COMPLETELY TRAUMATIZE THEM and so few of them actually know how to do it.

There's something hopeful about human relationships in the way we (at least my aro-ace ND ass does, don't @ me) see the permanence of relationships and the way we measure the hierarchy of loss. Like the way we respect the pain of a romantic breakup and don't talk about the pain of a friend breakup. It kind of tells us that friendships or romantic relationships can be fleeting, but family bonds are supposed to be permanent. It's the same way people leaving abusive families or refusing to respect older relatives are shamed for harming the sacred family unit. So it makes me wonder like, when you think of a Maker/Fledgling relationship, especially in a universe where they might live forever, where do we put the permanence of this relationship and how to we romanticize its longevity? The solution in the later books of turning fledglings as a favor to each other seems to be a huge progression for them and a way to avoid some of this. It puts more boundaries between Maker and Lover, where the Maker is providing your life and immortality and doesn't need to be there for the rest of it.

And especially because of the barrier, it's like, you CANT be here for the rest of it. You lose the ability to ever truly know each other again. You have to actually develop your verbal communication for this

to work and so many of these characters are too fucked up and not ready to do that hhaha. I think there's a lot of substance in here about like, relating to parents as adults and how that relationship shifts when you grow up. Something similar happens when you turn someone, maybe, like you've given them life and now you don't know each other anymore. And yet something very antithetical to being a mother when you've taken their life in the same moment. HMM.

I just really like the way the universe presents these relationships and how complicated they are. Or maybe they're decidedly uncomplicated because everyone is just "everything" to you. Your maker is your parent and your lover and your companion, they are your everything. It's only complicated when you try think about it like a human.

Still, anyway, for funsies. Thinking a lot about Maker Wounds today and how it affected Armand, and how it affected his future relationships and sense of self worth. 😊

I was reading this article on PsychologyToday.com about mother wounds if you wanna read it and learn more about what they are and what they do to you and how you fix them haha. BUT FOR FUNSIES, WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CTRL+F AND REPLACE TO VAMPIRE WORDS??

> *The best way to think of the maker wound is a loss or a lack of makering. This is typically a deficit in the maker-fledgling relationship that is passed down through generations, and it is a reflection on how we have experienced parenting and how we parent. While not a specific diagnosis, it is a way of looking at how current codependency behaviors may be linked to missing elements in the past.*

(Lol MAKERING good word)

So anyway I'm thinking about this concept a lot regarding Armand and I'm sure you could really take any set in the series and look for some of these patterns. But my main thing about Armand that I think harmed him the most was that

- Marius was very rigid with the person he expected Armand to be

- Marius never rescued him.

When you look back at some of the times Marius was especially cruel to him (I always think about when he hits Armand for crying about his dad or whatever lol) and like all of Marius's bullshit about I WANT YOU TO CHALLENGE ME … *but wait not like that !* it's like, was Armand just floundering with the cult and wondering what he did wrong? (See also: Armand's defectiveness schema haha)

It's a loss he can experience twice—on one hand, if he didn't think Marius survived the fire, there's no reason to think that he would worry about this aside from dealing with the grief of losing his maker. But if he believed Marius was strong enough to make it, or if he had any indication that Marius survived, that gives him a few hundred years to feel bad about himself and wonder if he's not worth saving. Then of course, when he learns that Marius is alive (from Lestat's book?) he can go through it again.

Like there's always going to be two sides to a reunion like that. Half might be: I'm so happy that you're alive, and the other half is: Wait you were alive that whole time and never came to get me wtf

I feel like Armand's early life and even his centuries in the cult are so rich with trauma and grief, though. He loses and loses and loses. He was devout as a human, ready to dedicate himself to living in caves, and it makes me wonder if the cult felt right to him, like he got there anyway. Maybe he looked at his time with Marius as a brief period of sin. It's no wonder that he doesn't know how to fuckin behave haha.

But you look back at what happened with Marius and it makes sense that some of his wounds and insecurities show up the way they do.

> *These types of feelings reduce self-esteem, feelings of self-worth, and feelings of worthiness to have a positive relationship. Individuals with a maker wound always feel incomplete and lacking in their ability to connect with others, while also having deeply rooted feelings about the need for perfection and control.*

It feels kinda similar to the way Louis is like GUY WHO IS TURNED WHILE SUICIDAL, like they all have something that kinda sticks with them, I think. Like something about their mortal lives that gets written into their personality. Armand was not rescued!

Here's some other fun stuff from the article:

> *Signs of the Maker Wound*
>
> *· Never feeling they had their maker's approval or acceptance*
>
> *· Concerns about not being loved by their maker or not being loved as much as other siblings or family members*
>
> *· Difficulties in relating to the maker on an emotional level*
>
> *· Uncertainty about the relationship with the maker and if it could be lost with a mistake or an accident*
>
> *· Always trying to do better or to be perfect, to attempt to gain your maker's attention and acceptance*
>
> *· Feelings of having to protect, care for, or shelter your maker rather than them protecting, caring for and sheltering you*

It's funny like most of what we know about Armand's relationships and how he behaves in them is from everyone's POV except his own. So it's almost like unfair to try to figure out how he is, how he feels, what last effect abandonment has on him when we're not hearing it FROM HIM. But it's like oscillates between being a needy baby or being a weird monster. I'm thinking of like, the "Love me" and pathetic way he threw himself at Lestat & Gabrielle, also the way he takes charge as a cult leader, also the way he introduced himself to Daniel. I just think there's such a deep need for acceptance, but

when that fails or when he's too afraid to be vulnerable he's gotta just be rigidly in control to cope with it.

Anyway I don't have a graceful offramp here, I just wanted to yell about this a little LOL. Also I wanna share one more bit from the article because it feels really potent to me:

> *These are makers who may provide for the physical needs of the fledglings, and even interact with the fledglings in a positive way, but simply do not provide the deep love and attention that all fledglings require. They may not have been abusive or neglectful, and they may never have engaged in negativity in their relationships with the fledglings, but they were also always distant and less tuned-into the emotional needs of their fledglings.*

This one sums them up the most to me, I think. Like the way Marius provided for him even when it's maybe not exactly what he needed. Giving him every material luxury he could need but slapping him because he's sad. It's such an enormous pressure to live up to.

Rewinding back it's so interesting because when you look at it as a family pattern like, Marius was abandoned by his maker too, even if it was a different circumstance. Marius would have also had to go through that loss more than once; if he ever imagined Teskhamen survived and couldn't find him, or if he ever wondered why Teskhamen didn't come to him sooner. Especially a vampire like Marius who was so known in the vampire world, and someone like Teskhamen who had connections to the Talamasca. But there's sort of a thing here of like, my maker didn't teach me how to vampire, I had to figure it out myself. But then he fucks up with Armand so bad that Armand falls into the "my dad sucks so I wouldn't be a good dad" space.

It kills me that we don't know more about what happened with Daniel, when they drifted apart, how he wound up with Marius, etc. I tend to wonder if Armand fulfilled his own destiny by convincing himself he'd be a bad maker to the point where he barely tried.

And where does that leave Daniel with all of this? Idk.

The thing ultimately that makes these stories so fantastical is that they have all the time in the world to heal, to grow, to get past grudges. This is what the article lists as solutions on how to heal this wound:

> *· Exploring the feelings of the inner child and allowing those feelings of being ignored, unloved, unwanted, or not valued to be expressed in a safe, therapeutic environment.*
>
> *·Learning to validate and love ourselves creates a positive emotional and mental picture of our lives as they are in the present time, letting go of the past concept of self-developed by our interactions with our maker.*
>
> *· Setting boundaries—creating a relationship with the maker that is based on your needs and the ability of the maker to change and contribute to your emotional needs in a healthy, positive, and fulfilling way.*

I wonder if Daniel has a hand in that, in bringing the two of them together.

Personally I’ve always felt like, I don’t “”””ship”””” Armand & Marius because I think they’re awful for each other lol but there’s just so much unhealed baggage here. But, like I was saying, vampire relationships are so different from the real world. I would love if they could simply coexist, be there for each other as needed, love each other safely. I’ve talked enough so I don’t want to get distracted with like all the work they’d have to do to fix it and how they’d have to build a new version of their relationship that exists in the present but it’s nice to see that there’s a way through and I hope Daniel can help them.

I WONDER WHAT DANIEL’S FLEDGLINGS WILL BE LIKE — !! 😱

Mother Wounds and Maker Wounds Ask & Response 03/06/23

Anonymous *asked:*

Can you elaborate onthe "lack of childhood" though? Sure he had the trauma from when he was abducted, then abducted again by the cult, but him growing up with his mortal family + those years with Marius (and especially since he remembers his early memories), I wouldn't say that's a -complete- lack of childhood lol. I'd say more of having to care for others from an early age (I'm including Marius here too, affectionately, the man was a mess back then)?

These are great points!!!!!!!!!

I have three basic concepts I want to submit here, and your mileage may vary! Some of this goes into headcanon territory so we might land in different places. My questions are:

1. If you had a good childhood that you can't really remember, does it count?
2. Can a young person sincerely be that pious without it being manipulative?
3. What age does Armand's "childhood" end when he's abducted at 14, at the oldest?

We don't get a ton of information about his life before he was abducted and part of that is because he's so traumatized that he doesn't remember—a mega Capital T Trauma happening as a young teen I think informs "childhood". I cede your point because I think a lot of people think of "childhood" as more early childhood, and especially in the historical context of kids growing up faster, we don't know that much about his early childhood. When he goes back to visit with Marius he talks a bit about remembering his uncle's singing and stuff, so we have that clue that his family did things together.

But we also have stuff like

> I stood with my head bowed. I let my temple rest against the mud. I wished to find the boy, so pure of soul, who had opened these cells to bring the hermits just enough food and drink to keep them alive. But I couldn't find the boy. I couldn't. And **I felt only a raging pity for him that he had ever suffered here, thin and miserable, and desperate, and ignorant, oh, so terribly ignorant**, having but one sensuous joy in life and that was to see the colors of the ikon catch fire.

He also immediately shows up and refers to his family as "filthy peasants".

> And it seemed I understood more viscerally than ever **the atmosphere of purposeful gloom which had overhung my childhood** in far-off Kiev. I saw again the muddy catacombs, and the half-buried monks who had cheered me on to become one of them.

So I'm admittedly really skeptical about most religions LOL but this entire book is Armand struggling with his religious trauma and like, when you think about it, cave monks aren't like. Very typical?

When he says stuff like “purposeful gloom” and “cheered me on to become one of them” I can’t imagine a situation where this isn’t coercive on their part, that he wasn’t being manipulated and groomed into a cult. And his father didn’t want him to join them; the cult was pulling Armand away from his family and life. And he mentions that the monks are all starving and cold like, it’s not like this was some glamourous life he could’ve lived where they were saving him.

He says:

> I looked back at my scholarly brethren.
>
> **All were emaciated, dressed in cheap black wool, reeking of old sweat and dirt**, and their heads were all but shaved. Their long beards were thin and uncombed. I thought I knew one of them, had loved him somewhat even, but this seemed remote and not worth considering anymore.
>
> To Marius, who stood beside me as faithfully as a shadow, I confided that I could not have endured it, but we both knew this was a lie. **In all likelihood I would have endured it, and I would have died without ever knowing any other world.**

And like fandom can debate all day and night about like the historical context of Armand’s age, and whether or not he was a child when he lived with Marius, but I think a lot about how his indoctrination into the Children of Darkness wasn’t simply him being brainwashed, it was his *relapse.* So when you look at the timeline of his life, if you think of like, say 300ish years with a cult, does he fold that tiny blip of time with Marius into his “childhood” ? idk.

But yeah I think like, to put a finer point on it aside from “lack of childhood” what we really mean when we say that is like, some kids go through traumas that force them to grow up quickly, and for a lot of kids it comes with parentification. Like, it’s enough that Armand was a hungry peasant in a cold climate, was (possibly) groomed by a cult, and then abducted and trafficked. But I wonder what Marius did to him too when it comes to like, the emotional support he needed and how he used Armand as balm to his own loneliness, all the while not allowing Armand to have his own emotional needs.

People kept *stealing him* and it makes sense that he might find a place in that world, and become a leader. It feels like the end result of a long series of events of having to put others’ needs ahead of his own, and also a way for him to have some semblance of control in the situation he’s been thrust into. So I think I when I say “lack of childhood” I’m really just gesturing wildly at All This Stuff and how it connects and relates to itself in the end.

His time with the Children of Darkness is a coming home of sorts; he still winds up pious and underground, and it’s like his whole life he keeps trying to climb his way out of it and always gets dragged back down. Like I think even his suicide attempt fits this as a relapse into religious crisis. He was doing so good!!!!!!!! ☹ Sigh.

And the thing about it, and reaching out more broadly to this concept of VAMPIRE THERAPY LOL is like, a lot of times children grow up thinking their world is normal, or a default, and the work we put in as adults is unlearning that idea and coming to terms with that fact that something was wrong. Armand

might not have been traumatized by being cold and hungry and ready to bury himself in a cave but when it's time to dismantle all that stuff I think it's important to make space for it. And even saying like, the concept of Armand going to therapy is silly hahaha so maybe it's not literal, but, I think it's still reaching the same idea if you ask him to grow as a person, to connect with Daniel and reevaluate his feelings about mortality and humanity, to care for Benji & Sybelle, to create Trinity Gate and get back together with Louis in a new way. All of this marks growth that he got to have.

So returning to my original point LOL, I always look at the way he's built Trinity Gate as a safe haven, landing spot, and how trauma can be so deeply tangled in us that it's like, how much of this is me and how much is the trauma, when does the trauma end and my personality begin, etc, and like. The truth is that sometimes you have to be patient and accept that it IS part of you, and you can try to be healthy and productive and kind to yourself without simply exorcising all the bad parts. For Armand it can be: "I created Trinity Gate as a safe haven for my friends & family out of love and it also feels like a burden sometimes."

Armand Pain Thought of the Week 03/17/2023

My Armand Pain™ thought of the week has been circling around his fear of making fledglings and his general skepticism towards it and how most of the time I tend to relate it to his cult experience but this week I'm also giving credit to how bad Marius fucked him up haha. 🤗

Like idk if this outs me either as a weak reader or as a FAKE ARMAND FAN but I think, because of the way he talks about it that to me it registers as quantity over quality; ie saying it NEVER works or that it's happened again and again makes me feel like he's referring to his centuries as a cult leader and the experience he would've had navigating everyone's relationships and interpersonal drama and generally being vampire HR and having to approve/deny requests to bring people in. Saying that it always fails/never works implies to me that it's something that he's seen many many times. And like, obviously it's about Marius as well, but, I'm just thinking a lot about the Marius angle this week.

Because I think a lot about like, the parallels between Venice & the Devil's Minion, like the way Marius treated Armand and the way Armand treated Daniel. I think also as a bonus that getting Marius's POV in B&G adds a lot of depth to their relationship and I sort of extrapolate a lot out of it, for both relationships.

But thinking about Armand not wanting to turn Daniel, there's the usual "You don't want it, it's actually a curse" stuff but the "Our relationship will never be the same if I do this."

He's seen it how many times in the cult–the barrier comes between them and it's never the same. It's another irony about immortality and the price you pay to live forever, or the price you pay to keep someone forever.

But I'm thinking a lot about how his relationship with Marius influenced it, too. And in both directions! Like, to Armand, Marius was this like majestic creature, a magician!, otherworldly and maybe saintly! Maybe demonic! Who knows, he's a mystery! And he can't read Marius's thoughts anyway, so when he turns he doesn't lose that. What he does lose, maybe, is the mystery of it. Marius changes from an ethereal mystery to *Some Guy*. And Armand is never his peer; he is not brought over and ever treated like an equal. Marius's power over him shifts from simply being a preternatural creature to that fact that he's old and strong, and he makes the choice to wield that over Armand and position himself as the master.

I don't think Armand had an interest in treating Daniel that way, even if he entertained turning him. In fact, I think Armand *yearns* for an equal.

BUT THEN I wonder this all the time, I wonder if Armand actually believed Marius was dead, or how often he changed is mind about it, or how often he forced himself not to acknowledge it. Because Marius being alive means Marius didn't save him, and when he starts meeting more vampires and seeing how they lose the magic & connection when they get turned, I wonder if he thinks Marius got bored with him. Especially with the narrative that he only turned Armand because he was mortally injured; I could see that festering to "he didn't actually want to turn me." (Put a pin in this for the family cycle that he does the same to Daniel 😵‍💫)

So it’s like devastating to read this towards his relationship with Daniel. And in both directions again. Worrying that he’ll be sick of Daniel, and worrying that Daniel won’t think he’s special anymore. The grief in turning Daniel isn’t just about him losing his life & mortality, it’s also that they lose their relationship as they know it. In some ways it’s like a breakup.

Armand is a person who’s lost his love ones and been rejected over and over lol. I can’t imagine that it hasn’t sculpted his sense of self worth. So even if he took the approach “I do not wield my power over Daniel, I will treat him as an equal, I will not be bored with him” I don’t think he can shake the idea that Daniel won’t stay in love with him because the love is conditional.

There’s sort of an absent father cycle trope here, too, in that Armand didn’t have a good maker (for a long time) and doesn’t know how to be a good maker, and in the end it’s too frightening for him to even try. Their failure might be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In the end like, I think this is very much part of VC lore that this happens to a lot of couples, but there are cases where they overcome it, too. I think even Marius & Pandora are a case of a couple that overcame it, even though the barrier became a logistical problem when they got lost.

But there’s this space I like to think about, post-canon, modern world, wondering how much they can learn and teach each other and heal and overcome it. There’s something about the series being OVER now that makes my imagination run wild about where else they would’ve gone, or how they might have evolved.

So maybe it’s not too late for them!!!!!!!!!!!!

Armand Pain Anon and Response 03/28/23

Anonymous *asked:*

I think what makes this whole situation even worse for Armand is that he only has one (1) fledging. There is literally no point of reference about anything when it comes to him and Daniel except for Armand's past experiences with Marius which in SOME ways are similar to what Armand and Daniel went through but in other ways they're completely different experiences. Lestat, Marius and pretty much all of the other main vampires in the series (even Louis even though RIP to both those cuties) have a whole roaster of fledglings to develop different types of relationships with and over the series, they allow them to grow and change and feed off each other, but Armand *only* has Daniel, so it must be legitimately maddening because all the good and the bad and the crazy is just… one relationship for Armand. And it's obviously a position he put himself in by obsessing over and falling in love with Daniel so hopelessly to the point where he couldn't even consider continuing existing without him. And then he cursed them both. But I think that in finding himself and regaining his will to live and to have meaningful connections in late canon, he was also able to accept Daniel's love again, and maybe to start having important conversations about the trauma they both went through when Daniel was turned and after they separated. I'd like to think they didn't just reunite in PL and immediately jumped right back into a relationship like two stupid teenagers but actually had Important Conversations about what they'd gone through before Daniel moved into Trinity Gate and they decided to give it another go. NYC has great therapists and they're rich so, please? 🙏

[dgajksdg I waited too long to answer this bc I was too sad but just for reference icymi I got this ask after posting this devastating shit]

fuck man!!!!!!

yes! YES.

(I feel like I don't have a lot to add except that I'm bawling my fuckin eyes out so hear me out for a sec)

It's just like, man Armand is so fuckin tragic you know? There's so much nature/nurture to think about when you look at the others but it's like, he was SO deeply traumatized for his early years I'm not surprised he couldn't even try. I bring this up from time to time but it's like, his time with Marius was so brief in the scheme of things, and even if his turning itself or the small amount of time he had with Marius wasn't traumatic, the fallout was ENOUGH. And like, to relapse back into a cult after being with Marius makes me wonder if he convinced himself that those years were like, an abomination or a mistake, even if his actual turning itself wasn't awful.

Then you look at someone like Lestat, who was also super traumatized by the way he was turned, and simply will not fucking stop making fledglings because he's so lonely and has no impulse control and can't cope with the concept of losing people. I think the two of them are both so desperate for companionship and still approach it so differently because of their personalities.

And even without turning people I just think like, Armand has dealt with so much rejection? It's hard

enough to get people to stick around when they're already vampires, like, why would he invest in a human at this point.

So yeah it's just, it fucks me up every day of my life that Daniel is the only one for him.

I think a lot about the "Remember then that it was love" convo with Marius and how like, Armand seems to have made steady progress in his relationships over the years. Like, acting like less of an animal, being more present with people, etc. And it finally settles on Daniel and repeats some of the Venice stuff.

The irony too of how he GOT Daniel there by being a fucking predator at first; same with how Marius chose Armand because he had no innate value anymore as a person, no one would miss him, every day Marius gave him was a bonus and he was living on borrowed time. Daniel's life sort of ends the night he meets Louis and Armand harasses him to the point of completely isolating him and fucking up his whole life. In that way he's at rock bottom with nothing else to lose, also on borrowed time, nowhere to go but up.

Anyway sdhgkjlasg boy yeah they have so much to talk about and like. I think there's enough anecdotes about vampires who go mad and don't recover, and it's promising to me that Daniel DOES recover. And I want them to speak and heal and I hope they both respect how fucking special it is that Daniel is The One.

Armand Pain Anon and Response 2 Marius Therapy 03/29/23

Anonymous asked:

Marius will visit a therapist because he's the wisdom vampire. But he'll end up turning his therapist as a lesson because how dare they make assumptions about him without surving 2000 years themselves!

Dgjkadls STOP LOL

This is actually so on brand for like Old Canon Marius who like, yknow, tends to SAY STUFF but doesn't actually mean it because it's part of the character he's crafted for himself. Like, of course he WANTS to be a wise patient mentor and he tells people like Pandora and Armand that he wants them to CHALLENGE HIM because he thinks that's something a wise patient mentor would say, when in reality he actually doesn't want to be challenged, and reacts very poorly to being challenged.

So that type of Marius would ONE HUNDRED PERCENT book some therapy to say "wow can you believe it, look at me, I am so enlightened I am so modern and open minded, I am such an example of non-toxic masculinity I cannot believe this, is everyone looking? Do you all see me doing it? Should I tell you about it? Can I announce to the entire Court that I can't come tomorrow bc I have a 8pm with Steven? He makes a special night slot for me do you believe it."

But then like. Is he gonna actually do the work? Does he allow Steven to challenge him? Does he go to therapy thinking that he's going to be validated for all his petty bitching and does he think he's paying somebody to have an outlet to complain about his life?????????????????? When Steven suggests "Marius I wonder if the common denominator here is *you*" does Marius FREAK THE FUCK OUT?? (Yes lol.)

((I'm laughing, if you're into nerdy psychology shit and ever watched In Treatment on HBO, this is very much Colin & Brooke's dynamic in Season 4 where he's presenting himself as this enlightened guy who isn't too masc for therapy but then it's an act and he becomes a raging misogynist when she asserts herself with him D:))

But anyway I cannot roast Old Canon Marius without also saying that in my mind, Post-Canon Marius has been humbled and is ready to do the work and stop being a cunt.

I've been tinkering with a vampire therapy fic (don't tell anyone) and how it would look for them. Yknow in a way that isn't cheesy LOL. But like how could they learn about psychology and how can they apply it to their unique lifestyles and brain structure. Who can they learn from, and is it possible to talk to someone or is it always going t be just reading self help books? But idk I just felt like the series ended on such a hopeful note. Marius is ready to stop hating himself for being a vampire, he's ready to try to talk to Armand (honestly, I think?), they all just had a harrowing near death experience that might call their feelings about mortality into question. He's going THROUGH IT with Pandora omfg. Ahjgklad.

Anyway. !!!!!!!! I believe in him lol he will be rehabilitated.

SORRY I FEEL LIKE YOU SEND THIS ASK AS A JOKE BUT IM JUST, FULL OF FEELINGS YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO NOT CRY ABOUT MARIUS WHENEVER SOMEONE GIVES ME THE OPPORTUNITY

Marius and Armand equal-opposite religious trauma 07/29/21

It's interesting to me that Marius and Armand both suffered sort of opposite versions of religious trauma and I think that contributed a lot to their inability to communicate and Marius's inability to empathize with him. 😭 In my travels I mostly see religious trauma discussed in terms of people who were raised with religion or indoctrinated and the work that goes into deprogramming. On the other side of that, I want to offer the traumatic experiences of atheists (myself included) who have been victims of bigotry or violence at the hands of religious people and in the name of religion. This isn't just about Marius's impatience for Armand when they're still in Venice (like hitting him and yelling at him for being sad lol) but it also informs some of the motivation for why Marius never rescued him. We know that in the beginning Akasha wouldn't let him leave the Shrine so he was forced to stay put at least for a little while. Like 100 years?! So that gave Armand time to settle in with the cult. We also know that Bianca was reaching out to Armand telepathically from the Shrine and it makes me wonder if Armand didn't communicate back, maybe Marius took that as a message that Armand didn't want to be rescued. And because of this disconnect between the way the two of them view religion I'm not sure he understands that even if Armand "doesn't want to be rescued" that it doesn't mean HE DOESN'T WANT TO BE RESCUED it just means he's completely trapped by his religious trauma and is susceptible to the cult mentality and indoctrination. Whether or not his beliefs are sincere or if he's playing along out of terror isn't something that Marius considers.

Until Armand has any type of meaningful healing we also can't know as readers if he's sincere or not. There are times he's drawn back into it (like when he gets abducted or at the end of Memnoch) but even in TVL when he enters the church to speak with Lestat it's unclear how much he believes in what he's saying. (Belief vs *Belief in* I think it's phrased at one point? Don't have my book with me sorry im teh laze) He knows the churches won't actually hurt him and yet skirts around out of the light. Is it superstition or can he not cope with the shame? But this is what religious trauma does to people, it's that theft of people's independence that causes so much self doubt. Armand falls back into this trap during moments of trauma.

I think this is somewhat of a blindspot for Marius, though. This is one of the subjects he's most cocky and righteous about. He's suffered horrific abuse (ie: his abduction, murder, and forced turning) in the name of religion and he has even less patience when he sees Christian zealots, whose faith he fucking PREDATES and knows is complete bullshit. So I think the entire concept gets him uncomfortable but for it to be any type of Christianity must be an extra kick in the balls because he *WAS THERE YOU GUYS HE KNOWS IT'S NOT REAL LOL.* That time he goes and spies on Armand I think is such a complex emotional moment for Marius and not just him being a dick and being disappointed out of atheist superiority bullshit but because Armand is thriving with them. (Thriving is of course very relative here LMAO I MEAN UR IN A CULT CALL UR DAD but that he's taken a leadership position and drank the Kool Aid and everything and is succeeding at his goal, fitting in, living a life.)

It seems like Marius struggled a lot with taking that as a personal betrayal and he's *hurt* but he's also completely incapable of apologizing or admitting he's wrong so I think it's just way too difficult for him to confront, because approaching Armand in that moment, where he seems "okay" and doesn't need

rescuing, means that Marius would have to apologize AND ASK WHAT ARMAND WANTS TO DO instead of being immediately accepted as a savior. He feels rejected and also is unwilling to risk a further rejection. Whoops.

Marius’ struggle with feeling emotion Anon Ask 03/03/23

Anonymous asked:

The quote you posted by Marius ... "I have lived lies. I have done it again and again. I live lies because I cannot endure the weakness of anger, and I cannot admit the irrationality of love."

What do you think he meant by "I cannot admit the irrationality of love"?

I must be super stupid cause I have no clue. Like is he saying he fears love? Thinks love as a sort of weakness/inconvenience? Is he having an allergic reaction to love in general?

If possible.... Can you break down the entire quote?

!!!!!! This is one of my fav Marius quotes, I’d love to talk about it.

So I noticed this actually comes up in Loustat as well, there’s a part in TVL where Lestat says his love for Louis is humiliating and I think about this a lot. I think it’s your choice if you ascribe this to Anne Rice’s own feelings and philosophy that got woven into her work, or we can also say that it’s another way that Lestat and Marius are incredibly alike.

Lestat says “the sheer excitement was excruciating, and **the love I felt for him was positively humiliating.**” which has always stuck with me!!! And in Lestat’s case I think it can be read as “I love Louis so much that I will act like a fucking moron” etc. LOL. I wonder for him if it means he’s overwhelmed by it, senseless, unintelligible, etc.

It also comes up with Akasha in QOTD: **“She loved him and it humiliated her**, and so she sought to hurt him. And she had.”

And speaking of humiliation, these are a couple moments where Marius mentions humiliation in Blood & Gold:

- His feelings @ Mael lol - “I was trembling with this uncharacteristic and **humiliating rage**.”
- When Armand is abducted by zealots (callback to Marius being abducted by zealots) - “But that was gone. All was gone. Amadeo was gone. My paintings were gone. And there came again the desperation, the bitterness, the humiliation. **I had not thought that such things could be done to me. I had not thought that I could be so miserable. I had believed myself so powerful, so very clever, so very beyond this abject grief.**”
- This is about Pandora leaving him - “**I was too distressed, too perfectly miserable.** I didn't want to see her companion, and when I thought of banging on the doors of her house, **I found it too utterly humiliating.**”

So I’m bringing this up because I think it’s kind of getting at the same point. And forgive me if my aromantic ass is missing something LOL but it feels like Anne often wrote about the humiliation of being vulnerable, and there's a throughline of loving people feeling vulnerable. I think it’s especially potent in a character like Marius, and again since he and Lestat are so alike it makes sense that Lestat feels that way sometimes and it came up in other books. Not to talk about Lestat too much LOL, we just have a lot of material to work with from him. I think they’re both people who have always been

rebellious and with that need for independence comes the need to know things and to be self sufficient. Modern emotional health and Brene Brown will tell you that vulnerability is a GIFT but when you're this fucked up it's hard! It's scary!

Like these are also a couple other things Lestat says in TVL that illustrate this point, too, when Armand is going nuts on all the books: "**I hate those who make me feel fear, those who know things that I need to know**, who have that power over me." and "Every word was received by a secret, **humiliating curiosity** and vulnerability."

And going back to the Marius quote! I guess the point I'm making is that Lestat and Marius are people who feel insecure when they don't have complete self possession or control, and to me this is one of Marius's HUGE character beats and something he's really been struggling with for his whole life.

The quote "I have lived lies. I have done it again and again. I live lies because I cannot endure the weakness of anger, and I cannot admit the irrationality of love." is part of a bigger moment where he's frustrated by his own anger and stubbornness. This is the whole section:

> Avicus looked directly at me. He appeared quiet in his heart and genuinely moved by my words. But what was the use? I said no more. **My proud calm was suddenly broken. The anger returned along with its weakness.** *I remembered the hymns of the grove, and I wanted to move against Mael*, for all the ugliness of it, to quite literally tear him limb from limb. Would Avicus move to save him? It was likely. But what if he did not? And what if I proved stronger than both of them, I who had drunk from the Queen? I looked at Mael. He wasn't afraid of me, which I found interesting. And my pride returned. I could not stoop to a common physical battle, especially one which might become hideously awkward and ugly, one which I might not win. No, **I was too wise for it. I was too good of heart. I was Marius, who slew the Evil Doer, and this was Mael, a fool.** They made to walk away through the garden and I could find no words to say to them, but Avicus turned to me and said quickly, "Farewell, Marius. I thank you and I will remember you." And I found myself struck by the words. "Farewell, Avicus," I answered. And I listened as they disappeared into the night. **I sat there, feeling a crushing loneliness.** I looked at my many bookcases, and at my writing table. I looked at my inkstand. I looked at the paintings on the walls. I should have tried to make peace with Mael, surely, to have Avicus as my friend. I should go after them both. I should implore them to remain with me. We had so much more to say to one another. **I needed them as they needed each other. As I needed Pandora. But I lived the lie. I lived it out of anger. This is what I'm trying to tell you. I have lived lies. I have done it again and again. I live lies because I cannot endure the weakness of anger, and I cannot admit the irrationality of love. Oh, the lies that I have told myself and others. I knew it yet I didn't know.**

Marius's whole schtick is that he sort of pretends to be this wise calm collected dude and he's actually the biggest emotional mess. He is THE pettiest bitch. And part of this is like, him sticking to his culture, trying to be ~the spirit of his age~ is trying to always come back to logic and reason. He tries to like, logic his way out of having feelings and it just doesn't work!!!! HE HAS LIVED LIES, HE KNOWS IT DOES NOT WORK. This comes up over and over in his book, that he is frustrated with his own anger, that he ruins his relationships, that he fucks up, and when he is being irrational & emotional he doesn't like the person he becomes. He's humiliated at the idea that he is a person who has feelings and needs.

(See also: my fav thing to bring up but him hitting Armand for being sad lol like he's trying to TRAIN it out of someone else even though he knows he's living a lie.)

So this moment with Avicus, he's like desperately lonely and WANTS Avicus's company and friendship. He wants to be able to love Avicus. But he's got so much fucking unresolved rage @ Mael that he can't be around him at all and doesn't know how to navigate his own messy emotions.

And really any time Mael shows up, as funny as it is to be like "lmao Marius is the pettiest bitch, he makes Mael sound like such a moron", please don't forget that Mael is the closest thing Marius has to a maker at this point. Mael is the symbol of Marius's rape and nonconsensual turning, and his ritual sacrifice. Mael brought Marius to his own murder!!!!!!!!!! **Mael is essentially his rapist.** And someone like Marius, who doesn't know how to admit he has feelings, incessantly tries to tell himself (and everyone else) that Mael is a blundering fool instead of having to confront this extremely real hurt.

As easy as it is to write off Marius's bullshit as "toxic masculinity" or "man who won't go to therapy" (which is a completely valid read LOL) it's also very much steeped in trauma. And like, as much as I want to allow Marius a space to exist in his own world and talk about him in 360 degrees, he's also not real. He's a character in a book that survives the whole series as an unmoving object. Marius's ability to heal or grow or be better is not really the point (but I do think there's clues in canon that he can make it there; I think him in the PL trilogy is very much a New Marius!); he can survive the entire series as a table setting to represent toxic masculinity and there's no obligation to heal. But the series asks us to spend time with monsters, to see the good in bad people, to ask if we are all our worst deeds, to ask what makes us human, and I think it's good to take these characters seriously as wounded people making mistakes.

The tragedy of it, too, is that Marius is just grinding ALL his emotions down in the process. He cannot allow himself to feel his own anger, and in the process of burying it, he also can't feel love. He cannot live in this standard where it's okay to embrace the irrationality of love but not the irrationality of anger. Throughout the whole series, every time he loses his temper and lashes out he just immediately feels humiliated for it and yet he can't find a middle ground where he can just allow himself to feel things. And he cannot find it in himself to forgive Mael or confront these uncomfortable emotions, which means he cannot have Avicus and means he's doomed himself to more isolation.

Feelings are not rational! They make you act like a fool! They make you open the floodgates to other feelings you do not want to feel!

I just think he's such a fascinating character because like, he knows! He knows! He knows he does this! He hates himself for it! He doesn't know how to get better! He knows he's a fuckup! He's lonely but if he tries to love someone it'll destroy him!!!

hedonistbyheart
Mar 3, 2023

My favourite Marius quote! I think you hit the nail on the head and I also think the conflict he feels ties into his latent insecurity about being a proper Roman. Roman men were expected to be in control, too much emotional excess was frowned upon, and Marius worked so hard while he was alive to fit in, only to be forced (by Mael, as you point out!) into an eternal state of hyper-passion that he then has to navigate through a Roman lens. I have many feelings about it!

monstersinthecosmos
Mar 3, 2023
Original Poster

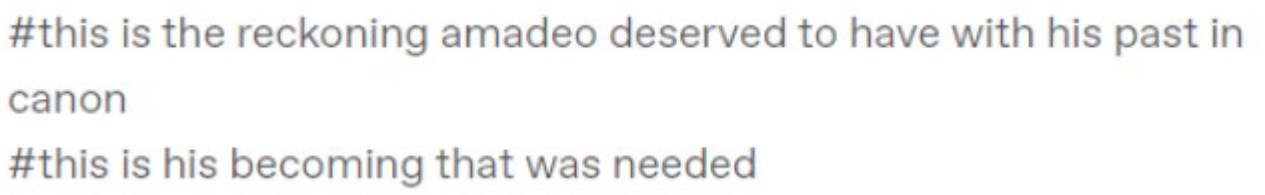
@hedonistbyheart I'm also very obsessed with how his forced turning is placed in a religious context when he was such a fucking atheist and how his obsession with The Parents turned into its own religion for the same reason, that he's not actually above any of this stuff he tries to be above . :(

hedonistbyheart
Mar 3, 2023

@monstersinthecosmos oh absolutely! It's so fascinating. One of the bits of conversation he has with Thorne that I love the most is the one where they discuss gods and Marius says the Roman gods were always like stories to him, but the way he asks about Thorne's faith in Thor clearly betrays that longing for pure faith. He sees it in Thorne, he saw it in Amadeo (and Santino!) and he hates it, but he can't help but be drawn into it too.

Gallows Bird fic post addition

So I decided to listen to my Armand playlist while I was working this morning and now I'm crying at my desk LMAOOO but anyway I was thinking about what @apoptoses said here in the tags



But also because I was listening to THIS SONG I GOT DEVASTATED AND STARTED CRYING LOL and like IT REMINDED ME BECAUSE I WROTE THIS VAMPTEMBER ABOUT IT LAST YEAR and I'm just super upset lmao

It's just so fucking sad because when we ask like, why was Armand brainwashed, why did he join the cult, etc, what we need to remember is that it's not new information to him. *He's relapsing*. He's traumatized and whatever progress he might have made in the years he lived with Marius is destroyed. HE DESERVED THIS RECKONING IN CANON AND YET ???? AND YET?????????????????? IT'S TEMPORARY.

My fic posits that Marius did try really hard with him, even in his own Marius way, to give him a path forward to be a real person, and it sucks that it things got so messy. And it sucks that Marius is also so traumatized that when he's finally healed enough to do something about it he just can't. (I feel like I should link this one too bc I found it digging through all the times I've cried about Marius so here.)

Anyway i'm so fuckign upset LOL and I chiseled away at this fic every day for two months so now I'm just so fucking fragile and in my fucking Armand feelings 😅

New to IWTV anon 09/30/23

Anonymous asked:

okay so i just finished IWTV..... oh my god!!! oh my god. it's embarrassing how insane this book made me. for the last 50 pages or so i was regularly taking breaks to run laps around my apartment like a lunatic because i physically could not handle all the pain and angst and despair coursing through my body LOL. i got so immersed in the story i forgot pretty much all of the background for armand you'd given me (and i can't remember most of it even now!!! my mind is in shambles) and still, very organically..... he became my favorite. even despite all of the. you know. and maybe even more so BECAUSE of it. i've just never witnessed an evil so heartbreaking!!!!!!!!!? THE ABSOLUTE DEVOTION?????? DERANGED AND UGLY AND UTTERLY BEYOND REASON????!!!! FUUUUUUUUUCK!!!!! i'm sorry for vomiting all over your inbox i genuinely cannot conjure up any resemblance of coherence atm!!! THANK YOU FOR POINTING ME TOWARDS SUCH LUXURIOUS PAIN i LOVE it i want MORE! <3 <3 <3

oh my god OH MY GOd ,… omg… 🥺 🥺

WELCOME WELCOME YES THIS HOW I FEEL EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE I WISH I KNEW WHERE TO EVEN START

(I really feel like just answering with this meme and not subjecting you to a wall of text but I'LL TRY !!!)

GOD LIKE WHAT THIS BOOK DOES SO SO WELL AS LIKE IMMEDIATELY GROUND FLOOR OF THE SERIES LETS US ALL KNOW THAT ALL CHARACTERS COMMIT EVILS AND ARE NOT GREAT PEOPLE BUT THEY ALL WANT TO BE LOVED AND ARE TRYING LOL.

LIKE LOUIS MOVES FROM ABUSIVE PARTNER TO ABUSIVE PARTNER UNTIL HE'S FINALLY SO DEAD INSIDE THAT HE CAN BE BY HIMSELF AND WALK AWAY.

AND LIKE IT'S SO HARD BECAUSE YOU SEE HOW CLAUDIA FREED HIM FROM LESTAT, AND THEN ARMAND FREES HIM FROM CLAUDIA. AND SOMETHING THAT ALWAYS FUCKS ME UP SO BAD IS THAT ARMAND HAS SUCH A SKEWED MAP OF APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR BUT HE'S NOT EVIL. HE'S TRYING HIS BEST, IN THE BEST WAY HE KNOWS HOW.

Wait hang on I'll take caps off I'm so sorry lmfao I'm just really worked up.

I think there's a sort of meme-ier version of this like Armand going "hi 🙂 I killed your daughter 🙂 you can kill all my friends if you want 🙂 I won't stop you 🙂 do you like me? 🙂"

But it's actually SO TRAGIC god. Like I read IWTV as a story about domestic abuse and the family cycle, personally, and I see Claudia as an Oedipal figure. Louis is unable to get away from Lestat until Claudia makes it happen, and Claudia winds up being so cold and cruel and he's stuck with her until Armand frees him. And there's a lot of conversation about like, Armand being manipulative or what he did to CREATE this, how did he push them both where he wanted them, etc, but the thing that gets me is that when Louis wants to break up, Armand lets him leave.

And like SKIP WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY IF YOU DONT WANT A SPOILER BUT LIKE I DID MENTION THIS IN MY OTHER POST —— but if you read Lestat's book and get the background on how he and Armand met, it's sort of the opposite where Lestat destroys Armand's coven and Armand is so devastated about it, vs 100 years later he ALLOWS Louis to destroy a coven. AND HE GETS THE GUY!!!! In TVL he like BEGS Lestat to be with him and Lestat isn't interested lol but he gets to keep Louis this time.

IDK IDK IM JUST REAL EMOTIONAL.

And like !!!!!!!! God idk. If you read more of the books you get so many indications about how people in Armand's life don't respect him, and a lot of times people write him off because he looks like a teenager. They don't take the danger of him seriously, which makes him even more dangerous. But it's so heartbreaking reading IWTV and seeing how Louis respects him so much, and sees him as wise and calm, and needs him!

And like maybe Louis is uniquely qualified to not judge people for looking like children because he has spent the last 90 years with a vampire child and respects her as an adult, you know?

If you keep reading you'll see how much Anne Rice like retcons or how much the continuity flops around so like EVERY book will have a Doylist vs Watsonian conversation like, she never comes out

and says that Armand looks like he’s 17 in IWTV and in the later books it’s a huge point every time he’s on the page just HE’S SHORT HE’S 17 HE LOOKS LIKE A CHERUB etc and maybe that’s because she hadn’t decided that yet but also maybe Louis is the only person who fucking respects him. :)

Marius in Captivity 10/18/23

nothing-but-paisley asked:

> Hi!! I would love to hear your thoughts about Marius' experience of captivity and how this affects his relationship with Armand. You alluded to this in Gallows Bird and I think that's a super interesting thread to pull

[Let me drop these two fics real quick to get it out of the way for reference sorry if this is obnoxious LOL but Gallows Bird (Marius/Armand) and The Lotus Eater (Armand/Daniel) !!]

Asdgahsdk oh boy

I have so many deep nuanced feelings about Marius de Romanus so be patient with me while I try to sketch this all out, I DON’T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO START!

So one thing I want to mention off the bat, which is not necessarily canon VC but is relevant to my fics and how I write, is that I process a lot of ND/ADHD stuff when I write, and this goes way back before I even knew I had ADHD. So even going back to like my earlier VC fics from like 5-6 years ago, I think I was constantly inserting traits of myself into my fics and trying to process them in the way that I thought they were just character flaws at the time. AND LIKE this is also relevant because I wrote Gallows Bird to be directly correlating to my Devil's Minion fics. For example, in The Lotus Eater, one of my huge emotional cornerstones in that fic/me talking about my own perceived character flaws, was the "he had been careless with this boy" theme. And I repeated that in Gallows Bird on purpose to link them lol. So that example is like, I was really inspired by like how ADHD can ruin things on accident; like you don't take care of something, miss a deadline, break something by being careless even though you DO CARE. At the time when I wrote The Lotus Eater I had no idea about ADHD so I just thought it was like this bad part of my personality that I was really struggling with. I am more forgiving of that now.

And I connect this also to Marius in Gallows Bird because like, something I really struggled with as a person is like the ND/ADHD impulse to like RELATE TO PEOPLE when they're trying to talk, like bringing up my own experience as a way to say "Something like this happened to me too so I can empathize with you", which is always well intentioned! And I've seen so much convo from ND folks that struggle with this because NT folks tend to misunderstand it as changing the subject/being narcissistic/whatever.

Anyway!!!!!!!!! Sorry for that preamble but I'm saying that like, I kind of approach writing Marius as a mix of canon & projection, because yknow it's my fuckin story and I feel like it lol but I think like the fun of fanfic and what makes people's styles unique and interesting is our mix of perspectives and personalities and like how we choose to fill in the blanks in canon or interpret characters, right?

Canon Marius makes a few comments when he meets Armand about how like, this is someone who is as bruised and damaged as he is, and someone who can heal him, and he feels their souls understand each other. And Canon Marius is like, arrogant enough (by his own admission!) to see the absolute HORRIFIC trauma the Armand went through and go "Oh yeah I had horrific trauma too."

How do we compare Armand's trauma to Marius's trauma? Idk. No one can answer that because we all respond to trauma differently. So I think to some extent there's some headcanon territory here of how everyone interprets Marius, and do we believe him that his trauma was SO SEVERE that it IS on par with what's happened to Armand? Or do we believe what he went through isn't so bad/was 1500 years ago and he's being obnoxious by comparing the two because he should be healed by now?

I'd also ask like, to what extent is neither true/is it not that fucking deep, like is Marius simply saying "wow this looks really bad, I want to know him for centuries so he has time to grow and heal"; like perhaps Marius at this point sees his captivity & murder as this awful thing that happened to him 1500 years ago and maybe it feels sort of disconnected.

BUT I DON'T KNOW, the thing about Marius is that he's so fucking stoic! Like I know I've brought it up a couple times recently but it's because I was reading some Marcus Aurelius to put in Gallows Bird lol so using that to like fill in some blanks with Marius, he reads like someone who is constantly trying to rationalize away his own emotions. And like! IDK! Maybe beliefs about psychology are always a

phases or temporary until we learn more, but reading him in 2023 I just call bullshit on that! It doesn't work that way! So who's to say that his 1500 year old trauma isn't actually still very close to the surface, and who's to say he can't be easily retraumatized whenever it comes up because he's never meaningfully recovered?

AND LIKE FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA THE AFTERMATH IS SO OFTEN ABOUT JUST FINDING CONTROL OVER WHATEVER YOU CAN, NO MATTER HOW USELESS OR UNHEALTHY IT IS. And that's also the sort of central thesis of Gallows Bird; giving Armand a space to process his trauma where he's in control. And for Marius it's just really sad how often he tries to control his own personality, his own feelings, his own mask, the way people perceive him, and it's such a struggle for him that it always eventually collapses.

I want to pause here for a second too and bring up a couple old posts I've written so I'm not repeating myself too much LOL but let's also consider:

- Trauma Hole Theory and if vampires are stuck forever within the trauma of their turning
- Marius & Armand's equal-opposite religious trauma
- Marius's struggle with feeling emotion

I think if we start dissecting ANY vampire in VC we'll see thematic ways that their turning has traumatized them forever, between the violence/trauma around the act itself but also whatever ways they've been frozen as their mortal selves. Lestat is a perpetually insecure 20 year old who can't emotionally regulate and must prove himself to everybody, Louis is someone who didn't want to live at all and was given eternal life rather than death, Armand is deeply wounded and fucked up but is having like 2 years of relative peace and safety. And Marius is like, older, has lived life, knows what he's losing and gaining, and has his entire worldview shattered after spending a year resenting religious zealots only to find out that everything they believed was true.

So I bring all these points up because I don't think there's a simple answer or a direct correlation here. Marius recognizes that they've each suffered a trauma, but he hasn't really dealt with his own in a meaningful way, therefore he is not equipped to help Armand deal with his either.

I constantly go back to when Marius hits him after they come back from Kiev and I think this really hammers it home for me—Marius is someone who wants to strangle all of his emotions into submission, and he's really trying to believe that it's a matter of willpower to simply NOT FEEL THINGS. So much of Marcus Aurelius is about this! AND IN SOME WAYS LIKE, YEAH THIS IS MAYBE AN ANCIENT VERSION OF CBT??? Like we do CBT to patiently teach ourselves to think differently, but it's obviously not as easy as simply shutting your emotions off or bullying yourself out of feeling any. And he's trying SO SO hard to be this way, and it doesn't work, so it's not going to work on Armand either!

And like it's not Marius simply being a dickhead, simply being abusive; I do think he's really trying, but he's fucking lost! HE HAS LIVED LIES! And god it just really hurts to see him as someone who struggles with this shit and who lies to himself about it, LIKE WHO HASN'T BEEN THERE? How many of us who struggle with mental health haven't had those moments like, those tiny glimpses

seeing behind the veil and being honest with yourself, but being so fucking powerless and not knowing what to do with it.

I know I've personally had moments of realization like "I am going to be like this forever" and it's SO defeating, and imagining that sentiment for someone who will LIVE FOREVER just hurts me so bad!

We see this trope in media sometimes—certainly it's based in real life!—of parents projecting onto children, trying to correct mistakes by breaking a cycle, but which only serves to treat their child like an extension of themselves and not a whole individual. So I think of that, too—Marius seeing himself in someone who was also abducted, and even though he also plans to turn Armand, he wants it to be beautiful and gentle! (He even changes his mind about it several times before he does it in a panic because Armand is dying! {this is heavily referenced in Gallows Bird because he realizes he's fucked Armand up to much to let him live anyway.}) He also is sorta trying to fake it till he makes it with all this emotional stuff; like even though he KNOWS he can't simply shut emotions off, he's still trying to teach Armand to. And going back to Marius being a lil arrogant, I think sometimes he does project himself onto other people, or treat people better if they remind him of himself. So like, projecting some wounded version of himself onto Armand to try to rescue, vs risking it all for Lestat a few centuries later because someone who reminds him of himself actually WANTS to be rescued.

The IRONY too that like he spends his whole time in captivity as a skeptic, not believing that there is a God in the Grove, and for that entity to turn out to be a vampire!!! Marius presenting HIMSELF as a god-figure to Armand, but trying to be safe and friendly about it! I don't know man I'm really fucking hsdkjgladsghkjl upset right now lol

And after all that like, not really knowing what exactly happened to Armand to indoctrinate him into the cult, just knowing that he's thriving with them, that he gave it all up to be their leader, is such a betrayal of everything and so traumatizing!

Gosh.

Anyway.

I DON'T' KNOW WHERE TO START I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO END, THINKING ABOUT THIS FUCKS ME UP I HOPE THIS ANSWERS YOUR QUESTION LOL

Marimand Ask 04/17/24

Anonymous asked:

LMAO THANKS FOR RIPPING MY HEART OUT WITH THE POST ABOUT WHAT A BLIP IN TIME VENICE ERA ACTUALLY WAS I GUESS?!?! im at workkkk i cant deal with this!!!!! ! 😫😫😫 WELL EVEN SO, how do you think armand views/deals with this difference in how formative those yrs were for him vs what they meant to marius? they were extremely significant for both of them but i feel like for very distinct reasons / in very distinct ways.... 😭!

i think he deals with it exactly like this:

✨ I fear him. I don’t know why. Perhaps I fear him because I could love him again, and loving him, I would come to need him, and needing him, I would come to learn from him, and learning from him, I would be again his faithful pupil in all things, only to discover that his patience for me is no substitute for the passion which long ago blazed in his eyes. ✨

I feel like there’s a huge fucking ~~mother wound~~ maker wound going on with Armand and I think a LOT of his behavior can be tracked to his abandonment issues. Making himself useful to people or trying to Spell Gift manipulate people into loving him back, or seeing a version of him that he wants them to see, etc.

Making a fledgling is his biggest fear and he sees it as a curse! He knows that once you turn them, they stop seeing you as special, you can never communicate the same way, and you lose your lustre, you become boring to them, there is no substitute for the passion which long ago blazed in their eyes!!

I’m gonna die on the hill defending why Marius didn’t rescue Armand – I GET IT – but Armand doesn’t know any of that. All he knows is that his Maker never rescued him. Even when he was out of the cult, running the TDV, easily track-downable, Marius never came to him.

In the way I think Marius declined to rescue Armand for fear of rejection, Armand also can’t bridge this gap back to Marius for a fear of rejection. He wants it! He wants what they had! But he knows they’re too different now and it’s never going to be the way it was, and they both have to do a lot of work to build a new relationship that could work for who they each are now.

But to answer your question I think it probably just really compounds the feelings of inferiority and the fear that he doesn’t deserve love! 🤗

Did Nicki really love Lestat? (leslutdepointdulac) 05/01/24

I feel like there's sometimes a question in this fandom as to whether or not Nicki truly loved Lestat, or if it was all a 'ruse' of sorts. Some people will say that there was no love there, either at points, or just overall. But personally, I'm inclined to disagree. The way I see it, Nicki *did* genuinely love Lestat, especially at the beginning of their relationship.

They knew each other as children and, to an extent, they grew up together. This already puts them in a relatively close relationship with each other. This relationship between them starts out as just a friendship, but of course this evolves into something more.

When Nicki presents Lestat with the cloak, it's him who is acting rather flirty towards Lestat, not the other way around with him leaning into him and saying

> *"Only the impossible can do the impossible."*

A week later when they're in the room at the inn, Nicki is the one who leans in and initiates that first show of intimacy, by kissing Lestat. Granted they were drunk at the time, but Nicki doesn't give me the impression he goes around kissing just anyone, even while intoxicated. I think the fact that they were drunk was just the perfect excuse/opportunity for Nicki to act on his feelings towards Lestat.

Further down the line, when they're in Paris - and at this point have been together for several months - Lestat returns to the theatre after his 'disappearance'. One of the first things the other actors do when Lestat initially arrives, is call Nicki to tell him that Lestat is back. And once he turns up to join the others in greeting Lestat, the actors immediately part to make way for Nicki to come through. I think they all knew there was a deeper level of connection between them. They share a very long and tender moment together, which the troupe allows without disturbance. Personally, I see that hug between them as coming from a place of love, heartbreak that they had been separated, and relief that they're back together again. Yes, Nicki had previously been, and still was angry and hurt that Lestat had supposedly left him, and without any warning. Especially considering Lestat was - as far as everyone else was concerned - perfectly fine during that time, only for him to turn up out of the blue with little to no explanation as to his whereabouts. I think Nicki's anger at this was partially down to Nicki being terrified at the thought he had lost his lover, and he couldn't hold his upset in.

Skipping forward to Nicki's turning, in my opinion, his very recently experienced trauma, combined with his already fragile mental state, were both amped up x100 by said turning.

The way I see it, Nicki got overwhelmed by the recent events and his mental condition clouded his mind causing him to lash out at the one person who he loved the most. Lestat. The reasoning for him lashing out at Lestat specifically, being because he was so immensely hurt by Lestat's disappearance, with him returning acting as though nothing had happened. This understandably angered Nicki, and mixed with his strong feelings for Lestat, it all bubbled up and exploded in their faces.

I think Nicki said what he said to Lestat during their last proper interaction, because he was deeply hurt and quite frankly, he just wasn't well. I don't think he was seeing/thinking clearly, and was probably also confused by the very sudden and drastic changes in his life. This led to him taking it all out on

Lestat out of a need to blame someone for everything that had happened. Lestat just so happened to be the easiest and most obvious target for Nicki to let his anger out on.

Eleni tells Lestat in her letters to him, that even the mention of his name in Nicki's presence is enough to send Nicki over the edge. But I think this was down to his mental instability, along with his lingering hurt that had festered in his mind for so many years at that point; he wasn't in his right mind and so wasn't able to give appropriate reactions to his former lover.

Before Nicki goes into the fire, he gives his violin to Eleni, with the instruction to send it to Lestat. He also says how he had originally intended to give it to him the last time they saw each other, before Lestat left Paris. In my opinion, I don't see why Nicki would've had his violin that Lestat bought him, sent to Lestat, right before taking his own life. And there is a chance that he did this with malicious intent, as a way to taunt Lestat, but in my mind, I feel as though there was some lingering care left for him. I don't know that there was any love remaining on Nicki's part, I'll be honest, but I do there was some semblance of care left in him. I don't think this is something Nicki would admit to anyone, even himself, and I also don't know that he was aware of this - that it was more of a subconscious feeling. But I still think, regardless, there was something still in Nicki that cared even just a little bit for Lestat, albeit buried beneath the darkness in his mind.

Re: Nicki's interest in the violin and his comment about wanting to 'go down' in Paris, I think his initial interest in the violin was genuine. But when people around him *cough his father cough* told him to abandon the idea, that's when it turned into a thing of spite. However, I do believe there was still an honest love for playing. Even after Nicki had gone mad, playing the violin was something he turned to as a source of familiar comfort through his dark times.

As for Paris, it was Nicki's idea in the first place for both him and Lestat to run off (although, yes, it was more of a joke when he said it.) But I think he genuinely wanted him and Lestat to get away from the village that had been suffocating them both for so many years. When Nicki said he wanted them to 'go down', I think that was also as a result of his unstable mind, and his hurt at the recent events being taken out on Lestat. There may very well have been elements of truth in what he said, but overall, I think it's just yet another example of his inability to contain his pain.

Of course, none of this excuses the way Nicki treated Lestat in the end, but I think to simply say it was all because he didn't love Lestat is missing out on taking a deeper look into the reasons why he did and said those things. To denounce the love Nicki felt for Lestat seems unfair to me given his situation. That said, of course people are allowed to interpret what they like in their own way, and if someone's read on it *is* that Nicki didn't love Lestat, that's their opinion and is perfectly warranted.

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monstersinthecosmos

The thing about Nicki is that I think he’s a really beautiful portrait of DEPRESSION. And this is something that happens IRL, too, that sometimes people with depression or other mental health issues can’t always show up the way they wish they could. I have dated a person with depression and I have also been the depressed person. It’s hard. It’s really fucking hard. It doesn’t mean that they don’t love, it just means that they have a hard time showing up.

And Lestat has his own mental health struggles as well, both when he was alive and as a vampire. He describes in his human life that he could get depressed and not leave his room. And we see the way Lestat bounces back, that he can have trouble emotionally regulating. We see how he can cycle through his emotions.

The thing about that, too, is that it isn't sustainable, and Lestat specifically has trouble regulating. So their relationship is hard, because Nicki needs Lestat's light, but Lestat also needs his own light. Lestat is also unwell and probably not equipped to care for somebody else, so their relationship is difficult.

Nicki having depression feels realistic to me because it splits out into so many things, like the anhedonia is one thing, but it's also the lack of self worth. When I say it's hard to show up, I mean that Nicki might feel so bad about himself and see himself as a burden, and reach a point that he doesn't put the effort in because he doesn't think he's worth loving, and doesn't want to drag Lestat down with him.

So anyway. It's complicated, it's messy, it's devastating, it's the formative relationship in Lestat's life that I think has dictated so much about how he behaves even two hundred years later, it's two people who really do love each other but neither are well enough to take care of the other, and it's a fucking tragedy!

Nicki loved him so much!

Starving

DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT HOW MARIUS WANTED TO STARVE ARMAND TO SEE HOW LONG HE COULD GO BEFORE HE WAS TOO WEAK TO OPEN HIS SARCOPHAGUS AND HOW MARIUS WAS TURNED BY A GENERATION OF VAMPIRES WHO WERE RITUALISTICALLY STARVED AND SO WEAK THAT THEY COULD NOT ESCAPE FROM BENEATH THE GROVES.

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do you ever wonder where Armand learned the LET'S WALL THEM UP IN A COFFIN TO PUNISH THEM trick from; was this like passed down through generations of cult leaders as a neat thing to do or did this idea haunt him his whole life (just Marius's lesson not to let himself get too weak to rise) or if other vampires ever gossiped about the old gods and the old ways; I wonder how much Christianity overtaking Europe affected the Gods of the Grove and like, as the vampire counter-part to Christianity did the Children of Darkness know about them and wish to eradicate this behavior, is it like an old vampire legend that you can starve people and leave them somewhere contained.

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bioluminescently-unfolding

Oh, it's even worst than that: he learned it from the Monastery of the Caves. All those immured monks who he used to go round as a mortal boy, feeding and watering them just enough to keep them alive, but never enough to sate them...

It truly haunts me how many correspondences there are between Armand's fate as a Coven Master and the fate the monks wanted for him in Kiev.

Marius’ Trauma (binghelovebot) 05/13/24

While as mentioned yesterday I do think Marius's own trauma and avoidance of it played into him not going back for Armand; I'm actually pretty inclined to believe him about Akasha's involvement with him not going back for Armand for a few reasons.

I think Marius's pride and trauma around being controlled often manifests in denial or giving himself more agency than he really did. For him to just outright admit it, particularly in the context that everything with Akasha turned out to be for *nothing*, does (for me!) point to this being him finally admitting to what extant he let her control him, and what a mistake it was.

I don't really think there is a comparable power dynamic in the series to what Marius had going on with the ones who must be kept. It's not just age or personal danger to one's life, it's danger to every one of your kind. Akasha is very close to being a literal living God, with the powers of one. Marius and his generation at least have a few peers to keep them in check. As far as Marius was aware until meeting the twins, the ones who must be kept didn't - not that it would really have changed much of the dynamic if he knew she did. She can wipe out most of their kind with ease, she can survive things (like the sun) that allowing to happen to herself will destroy most of their kind through her.

I think the reason Marius doesn't resent her is that...he *does*, but how do you resent a God who could read your thoughts and could destroy everyone you love without blinking? We see him harbor resentments towards his duty and then immediately repress them, often in half hilarious half tragic moments. He worries they can sense his resentment and works to wipe it out of his mind even while he doesn't know if they're even paying attention. He's living in his own panopticon but the consequences for attempting escape aren't merely his own death, but the destruction of his entire kind.

So when he tells Thorne that Akasha influenced him to not go after Armand, I don't think it's *just* him avoiding his own reasons (though I do think those existed), I think it's someone who spent 2000 years caring for and worshipping a God in part terror part love all obligation and knowing now they did it all for *nothing*.

(And at the same time: for everything. Because even now, he loves her, and even now, what other options were there?)

[tags]

marius's trauma and fucked up relationship with akasha cannot be underemphasized! obsessed with the way he alternates back and forth between craving control and also blaming others not having control is his hugest sense of trauma spanning his entire life and hes got the enormous pressure of being the keeper i think it's also easy for him to become angry with ppl who wrong him in a way that it's easy to pin these feelings of helplessness on them so i think akasha HAS meddled in his life ESPECIALLY WITH HIS FLEDLINGS like even with pandora & it's just really interesting to see the way he can anchor his personality within the idea of his own trauma or the ways hes being wronged when it can serve/protect him! anyway sorry i havent had caffeine yet today LOL

Monstrosity of monsters/Human’s as pets 06/09/24

Anonymous asked:

Hi, completely agree with what you said here but it makes me very sad to think about it. As someone who imprinted on Armand at 12, Marius/Armand was my first ship in VC but I find it hard to ship them post Venice era, even though Blood Communion seems to suggest some positive developments in their relationship (Marius standing behind Armand during his argument with Benedict supporting Armand being his own person iirc?). Idk I want them to work their shit out but it’s still hard to imagine them putting their differences aside sans an apocalyptic scenario like in QotD.

And sometimes idk if Marius loves Armand enough to work on it. I know that the corner of tumblr that loves Marius (And I certainly understand the appeal of a complicated and polarizing character like him. Kudos to Anne for creating Marius!) likes to push the idea that the turning of Benji and Sybelle was mostly out of love (and to a varying extent depending on the person’s pov, due to Marius’ mental health issues) but how much was that love and how much was it ‘my pet needs to have pets so that he stays alive for ME’. Not saying these 2 motivations are mutually exclusive but I’m genuinely curious about your views.

I’m rambling but guess what I’m trying to say is, how much do you think Marius’ love for Armand is unselfish, whether in Venice, at the end of TVA or after Blood Communion?

Asdghjakl yeah I have really similar feelings about them as a ship! Like the Venice era is my favorite time period in the VC but modern/present-day Marius/Armand doesn’t really hit the same way for me because it’s just such a motherfuckin mess lol.

What I do want to say, though, is that we’re kind of dancing around a topic here that involves the inhumanity and inherent *monstrosity* of Marius, and while I tend to think “THEY’RE VAMPIRES” is a lazy approach to analysis, there’s a deeper version of it that’s relevant here.

What I mean is that Marius can love Armand truthfully, sincerely, unselfishly and STILL cause harm, and still love him imperfectly, and still cause problems. I think when we really wanna start dissecting Marius/Armand as a ship, and the Venice era as a whole, and whatever trauma it left on Armand vs Marius’s motivations/intentions/character morals, it’s important to remember that *Marius was not human*.

I think a lot about like, when we say that Armand is a “pet”, or that Denis, Daniel, Benji, and Sybelle are Armand’s pets, there’s sort of a connotation or shorthand to TLDR that it’s their cute little human. But I think about like, for example!, my fucking cats! Like, when I think about ACTUAL pets IRL, um, I would fuckin die for my cats? They’re my lil babies? I love them so fully and with my entire fucking soul but they’re dumb little animals that live in my house and I take care of them and I don’t think they have a single thought in their fucking skulls.

So when you think about like, a 1500 year old immortal night creature adopting a little human, he can love Armand with his ENTIRE being, and I believe he really really did, and it’s still “aww the cute lil human that I feed”. And Marius is unique amongst the vampires for how hard he tries to stay connected

to the human world, and it's still never enough, he's still never quite there, so I have always believed he had the right intentions even if he fumbled it or did things that could cause harm. It's not like, he's a ~MONSTER~ in a scary way, but literally, he's so removed from humanity that he doesn't know what the fuck he's doing.

(Don't let me get into a side essay here but it reminds me so much of like, imperfect boomer parenting, like looking at different generations' parenting styles and realizing how much harm they caused, but most people aren't intending to harm their children and just don't know any better. Every generation will likely experience a form of this as we learn and grow and try to be better, but I find this really interesting for Marius specifically because of the age of the author!)

He was *fifteen hundred years old* when he met Armand. I think in a lot of ways he acted with good intentions that wound up causing a lot of harm. But it does a disservice to the story and to him as a character to only look at the outcome, without considering the universe he's operating in.

And idk like, where is the line between selfish and selfless love? Like, Marius is clearly a fucking mess at the beginning of TVA and didn't take the news of Armand's suicide very well. Is it selfish to do something drastic because he's worried that Armand is still suicidal? Where does one end and the other begin? Especially with immortals like, is your own death a gift? Is it an act of kindness to save someone's life instead of allowing them to check out? Idk idk! Grief is fucking messy, it can be both, but I don't think it's fair to characterize it as purely for himself. He even immediately fucks off to Norway in shame afterwards. I think I prefer to think he just wanted Armand to be happy and safe. By the end of the book they're still struggling to communicate with each other about religion, and in some ways I think Marius doesn't think Armand truly wanted to die, vs seeing a religious fit for what it is. So I'm not sure he sees Armand's suicide attempt as sincere, either, and maybe doesn't feel the need to respect his wish for death.

I think a lot about the conversation Marius has with Armand after he turns Benji & Sybelle and realizes how bad he fucked up.

> "You loved them selflessly," he whispered. "For all their strange faults, and wild evil, they were not compromised for you. **You loved them perhaps more respectfully than I… than I ever loved you**."
>
> He seemed so amazed.
>
> I could only nod. I wasn't so sure he was right. My need for them had never been tested, but I didn't want to tell him so.

Even at 500 years old, Marius still doesn't entirely understand Armand as a complete person. He doesn't completely understand Armand's needs, or the person he wants to be, or what his human companions were to him. I think it even starts when Armand is still alive, how Marius treats him like a silly little pet, like, Armand's piety is a cute little quirk that Marius humors without ever truly respecting. It doesn't occur to him that Benji & Sybelle aren't just pets. And I think Marius being stuck in his trauma means he's just perpetually trying to believe in himself and control everything around him, while Armand stuck in trauma means he's constantly trying on different roles and figuring out who he is.

(But FUCK ME, christ, "*I wasn't so sure he was right. My need for them had never been tested, but I didn't want to tell him so.*" this really fucks me up so bad, we have to keep talking about this another time because like, these two can NOT communicate with each other! They are useless with the barrier between them maybe they need to drink from each other more often and iron this out.)

Someone can do their best, and mean well, and still cause harm. Humans do this, too. I'm sure we've all been there. And Marius is a great example of vampires being stuck in the trauma of their turning—it doesn't matter how wise he tries to be, he always comes back to the same trauma, over and over. Even the way he treats Armand in Venice is a direct result of Marius trying to fix his own trauma. And like, would therapy even work on a vampire, or are their brains stuck forever where they were? How much of their "changing" is just learning behavior, and learning to mask?

Because I think Marius 100% could do that for Armand. He loves Armand. Armand is his child. He was the first fledgling Marius ever made of his own will, after 1500 years! But I think canon left us off in a place where neither of them are quite there yet. Marius is in decent shape at the end of the series, I think—it feels like he's made some huge strides in accepting himself and his nature, so I think there's some potential! Armand also has to learn how to use his fuckin words a little bit better, which he's never been good at, but I think the way he goes off on Lestat after keeping that inside for 200 years is a really great sign!

I go back and forth about "does therapy even work on vampires" all the time, like, do they have neuroplasticity, are they capable of change, have we uncovered something in the PL Trilogy that could be a key to them functioning better and learning to change. I don't really have an answer because canon doesn't, it's just a fun thing to think about, but it's the best way that I can reconcile Marius's intentions vs his actions, and how he somehow continues to make the same mistakes and never learns!

Basically, I think it's not helpful to ask if Marius loves him enough. He does! But loving someone doesn't mean we magically know how to behave, and the qualities in Marius that cause him to behave selfishly are so deeply tied to his trauma, his control issues, his use of ego as a defense mechanism. And even in real life we can have boundaries and hold people accountable when they hurt us, even if it's because of mental illness. We can have empathy and still have boundaries, and we can be hurt and still know when something wasn't personal. That feels kinda IRL and serious to frame vampire meta but like, Marius can love people and still fuck up, because he can't help it, and I don't think it's a fair reading of the text to insist he's a diabolical abuser because it just doesn't really match his characterization otherwise.

I hope he gets better!

Fawn response (apoptoses) 07/17/24

Anonymous asked:

🚨 what do you think is the best and worst thing Armand ever did?

apoptoses answered:

Oh anon strap in, this is gonna get heavy.

Disclaimer: this is my personal read, my own meta, everyone else is entitled to their own takes etc etc

We're gonna start with the **worst**: everything he did with Louis in iwtv.

Let me explain.

Something that is very common for survivors of trauma that was more psychological in nature and required betraying oneself in order to stay safe is to enter the fawn response. Aka people pleasing. Someone who has learned that they have to pretend to be someone else in order to keep others around them happy and keep themselves safe doesn't just shake that when the threat has ended. They then go on to feel as if they *must* do that in all future relationships in order to be loved and cared for, and if this goes unchecked then it can manifest into some really damaging behavior.

Things like lying about personal beliefs in order to tell the desired companion what the traumatized person *thinks* they want to hear, trying to control outcomes of certain situations in order for things to happen that they *think* will keep the desired companion with them. Someone who is people pleasing ends up saying "Yes I love the thing that you love" to one person, while saying deep down (or to another person) "I actually hate this thing so much".

And while it's understandable *why* someone who is people pleasing believes they have to act that way, it leads to their companion feeling manipulated when they find out that all the things that were said and done to 'please' them were untrue or done simply to control the situation and keep them around.

(And if it gets really out of control, subconscious behavior can become conscious acts of manipulation)

So with Louis we meet an Armand who says that he cares nothing for god, that if he met a mortal who inspired a lust for life in him once again he would turn that mortal immediately, that he would have turned Madeline himself. As readers we find out this isn't true later, that Armand struggles with his faith, that Armand would rather suffer anything than turn someone else into a vampire. But if we look at his words from a perspective of someone in a fawn response, he's saying those things because he believes that's what Louis needs to hear in order to accept his love and love him back.

And in more overt ways he forces Louis' hand with Madeline by using his influence, because Armand has decided it would be 'good' for Louis to turn her, that this will help him accept the loss of Claudia and come be with him. It's an act of controlling the situation to try to control for Armand's desired outcome (Louis loves me and will leave Claudia behind for me) but he's doing it under the people pleasing lie of 'this is what Louis needs, this is what will make him happy' when really it's about what will make *Armand* happy and safe. In that act subconscious fawning has become conscious manipulation.

While Armand’s emotional detachment and lack of reaction to the burning of the theater and death of Denis is in many ways related to his self-admitted inability to feel anything at that time, there’s also an aspect of fawning there: in order to people please one cannot offer their real feelings for fear of upsetting the companion. So really it just leads this situation where Louis doesn’t know how Armand really feels about *anything*. He never shows Louis a moment of hurt or anger or outage, which we readers know he is capable of, because in order to feel safe and continue to 'please’ he cannot let himself feel anything at all except that which his companion feels.

And that’s why their relationship crumbles, because Louis is right: they cannot offer each other real love because Louis is mired in grief and Armand is incapable of being fully honest. He can’t cultivate a true sense of self and show Louis that self because he’s too swept in fawning for him and 'pleasing’ him. Even when he and Louis break up he doesn’t show his hurt, doesn’t articulate having felt neglected. He just walks away, holds it all in, and fawns away his own feelings.

So that’s why I think the **best** thing he did was that moment of sincerity with Daniel right before he turned him: admitting that he felt like a coward, and that he loved Daniel far too much to let him die.

In his explorations with Daniel Armand stops pleasing and swings to far other end of the spectrum for a time: he is so utterly absorbed in exploring the world and figuring out who he is and how he fits in that at times he doesn’t consider Daniel’s feelings much at all. But by the end of things when the running begins, he doesn’t chase Daniel until Daniel calls for him. He becomes honest about his feelings and desires, despite the layers of shame he’s heaped upon them. He stops detaching and fawning and gets *real*.

Which in the end is the key to him re-uniting with Louis and building a healthier relationship, creating his own home, opening the door to future reconciliation with Marius and having Daniel move back in with him. Armand had to learn to be himself fearlessly so that he would have genuine love to give.

Response to “lack of childhood” (fofoqueirah) 08/09/24

fofoqueirah

Great meta, really great esp. in the "if you don't remember, did it happen?" 👀 👍

I actually am **obsessed** with the short scenes we see of Andrei's life so I'm adding a few cents here from what we see!

Its at least implied in text Ivan agreed to let Andrei live with the monks as a painting apprentice because they would provide the environment (and expensive pigments/tools etc) he needed to make his icon art. And this decision likely happened when Andrei was really young, because he does say the Monastery of the caves was the monastery "of his childhood". Andrei grows up within the context of the Monastery, because they're the ones funding his art. Ivan brings egg for tempera in a scene, yes, but the pigments, canvas, brushes, but also jewels and gold foild are all supplied by the monks. It's likely that Andrei is doing a paid apprenticeship, under the monks. Like... the monks starve themselves for pious devoted faith, not for lack of resources. They're taking a vow of poverty, but they have the money. So yeah, Andrei is "employed" by the Monastery of the caves, probably on Ivan's request (originally). It is likely that the monks "sell" some of his artwork, or trade it for favors, or they would not have agreed on letting Andrei ride out with Ivan and Prince Michael. There is clearly some arrangement going on betweem all three involved parties — Ivan, Andrei and the monks.

Alas! Leaving Andrei with the monks backfires tremendously because obviously no religious space is going to let an artist create without being subject to preaching, and he was... I'm going to say "converted" into their faith, making the choice of being a monk. Angry, resentful Ivan noises.

Also, it is worth mentioning (and in line with what is said here) that the reason Ivan can't just force Andrei back home from the monastery is because by their standards, Andrei is already old enough to make his own decisions, even if said decision is burying himself alive. Ivan's aggressions and literal beating and dragging of his son read like a man's desperate (misguided) attempt to save his child's life, because he knows there's little else he can do. Ivan has a literal prince in his party when we see them leave the Monastery. If he had any legal or social "power" as father over his son, he would exert it to force and keep Andrei out of the Monastery. Prince Michael only intercedes to force the monks hands into letting Andrei ride with them because Andrei is a good hunter, and he sounds unhappy to have to do it. And even then Andrei says he'll come back to his faith. Andrei may be perceived as Ivan's boy (the word novice is also used!), but at the end of the day he is still his own man in Kyiv Rus, because Ivan has no parental power over him anymore.

All this to say, the only memory of Armand's "childhood" we see, he's already not seeing himself as an infant by the standards of his time and upbringing. The only core memory we are given and he's already ye ole Brother Andrei by choice.

And then the narrative of TVA makes it clear Armand does not perceive himself as a child while he is in Venice, and in fact, this is a big source of conflict between him and Marius (who seems to want Amadeo to lead the carefree life of a young Venetian apprentice). Amadeo is conflicted, because yeah he's young and being an apprentice under Marius feels nice for him for a change that he indulges with

Riccardo and the other boys, but he also can't perceice himself as a child because prior to Venice he was seen as a man capable of his own choices and he argues about that with Marius at least a few times.

Word-choice wise, Armand settles for calling Venice his "youth", while Kyiv is mentioned as "childhood" by his own words a few times in the narrative.

So yeah, the one scene we have where Armand remembers a good "chunk" of his early life, he probably does not even consider part of his childhood because we're shown a Brother Andrei making awful religious choices. He might have some small brief memories of little things prior to the Monastery, but big core childhood memories seem to be locked behind the "tartar-rape" trauma paywall.

If Armand had a nice childhood, we are not given any clues within TVA that he remembers those moments. So it's pretty safe and tragic to say that for writing and meta reasons, Armand did not have a childhood.

Would Marius Do it All Again 08/13/24

Anonymous asked:

Marius considers Armand the main mistake of his life

Do you think he would turn him into a vampire again if he could go back in time?

!!!!!!!!!! the easy answer to this is yes of course because he's a person trapped in a cycle who makes the same mistakes over and over 😂

but! the deeper answer here is that I don't agree that Marius considers Armand a mistake!!!!!!!!!

I think he regrets the *way* Armand was turned and regrets that he didn't take care of Santino when he had the chance. I think he spent 500 years feeling like he failed Armand, and so the content of the actual mistake is not Armand himself, but the circumstances around him and wishing things had been different in Venice.

This is the part in TVL where Marius says he fucked up with Armand -

"Whatever will happen will happen, but choose your companions with care. Choose them because you like to look at them and you like the sound of their voices, and they have profound secrets in them that you wish to know. In other words, choose them because you love them. Otherwise you will not be able to bear their company for very long. "

"I understand, " I said. "Make them in love. "

"Exactly, **make them in love**. And make certain they have had some lifetime before you make them; **and never never make one as young as Armand. That is the worst crime I have ever committed against my own kind, the taking of the young boy child Armand.** "

"But you didn't know the Children of Darkness would come when they did, and separate him from you. "

"No. **But still, I should have waited**. It was loneliness that drove me to it. And Armand's helplessness, that his mortal life was so completely in my hands. Remember, beware of that power, and the power you have over those who are dying. **Loneliness in us, and that sense of power, can be as strong as the thirst for blood**. "

So like obviously AR retconned Armand's backstory a bit over time, like this version of events doesn't say Marius did it because Armand got stabbed and was dying lol, but I think there's still a throughline between this and TVA and B&G about how Marius was trying to wait, and in waiting kept changing his mind until his hand was forced.

And don't forget that during the Venice era he was also painfully in love with both Botticelli and Bianca, and he used Armand as a rebound from them. He was going off of Eudoxia's advice to pick someone he could groom for vampirism, and he picked a traumatized teenager who could be a blank slate.

He changed his mind almost immediately though! He loved Armand! He knew he couldn't do this to him, but also began to realize he'd sort of ruined Armand for regular life anyway, and it was inevitable!

So I think like, in any version of events, or if he had the chance to do things differently, the common denominator of crushing loneliness would push him to it anyway, and he loved Armand anyway. He wanted to keep Armand. I just wonder if he'd try to prepare him better and let him live longer, and take care of the coven so that they wouldn't ruin Armand's life.

And the thing about time loops & time travel that we see in storytelling all the time is that things are sometimes inevitable. Like, Marius can go back in time and try to keep Armand from dating Harlech, but he can't do anything about it during the day, and Armand is going to do it anyway. Armand isn't going to listen!

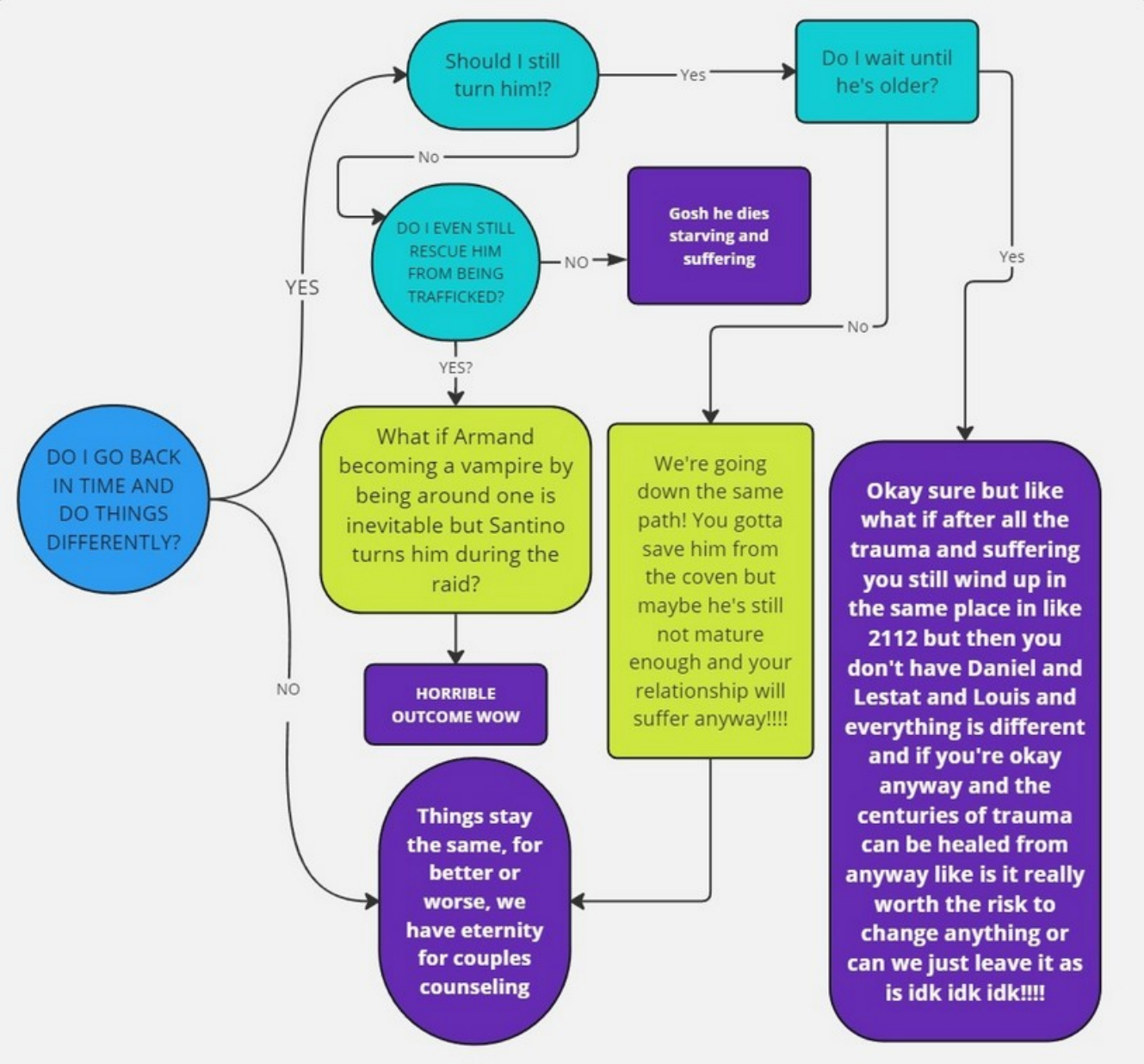
And when I think about what parts of Armand's personality are innate and what's The Trauma it's like, we talk all the time about how they're immortal and have all the time in the world to heal, so who's to say that Armand won't be okay one day! And would the Marius of 2112 risk a change like this if Armand is happy and okay and their relationship is good?

Because even if he waited and turned Armand a little older and they had more time together, and eventually get to a good place, is it worth the risk to lose the GOOD things they've built together, or that have happened because of Armand? Like without Armand, would Marius have Daniel? Would he even have Lestat? Would he have ever been freed from TWMBK?

There's a fluffy version of time travel where you go back and fix something and everything is okay LOL so we ultimately come back to the classic topic of Marius loving selfishly vs selflessly–would he ever decide his loneliness is worth the 300 years of pain that Armand went through? Or are we dealing with the type of time travel that says some things are inevitable, and the lesson of the story is that you can't change it without losing something?

And how would ARMAND even feel about it? Armand takes his immortality like a champ and while he has big cosmic feelings about it sometimes, he doesn't complain. He feels love. He still fears death like everyone else. Is this a risk he'd even consent to? Would he turn in his own damnation for death? Is his death, and the gift of being freed from a curse worth missing out on his love of Lestat and Louis and Daniel and Benji & Sybelle?

THERE'S JUST SO MANY WAYS IT COULD GO WRONG LIKE IS IT EVEN WORTH IT IDK


Should I still turn him!?
Yes
Do I wait until he's older?
No
DO I EVEN STILL RESCUE HIM FROM BEING TRAFFICKED?
NO
Gosh he dies starving and suffering
YES
Yes
No
YES?
DO I GO BACK IN TIME AND DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY?
What if Armand becoming a vampire by being around one is inevitable but Santino turns him during the raid?
We're going down the same path! You gotta save him from the coven but maybe he's still not mature enough and your relationship will suffer anyway!!!!
Okay sure but like what if after all the trauma and suffering you still wind up in the same place in like 2112 but then you don't have Daniel and Lestat and Louis and everything is different and if you're okay anyway and the centuries of trauma can be healed from anyway like is it really worth the risk to change anything or can we just leave it as is idk idk idk!!!!
NO
HORRIBLE OUTCOME WOW
Things stay the same, for better or worse, we have eternity for couples counseling

JUST THE BRIEFEST OVERVIEW WITH A FEW SIMPLE OPTIONS, THIS HAS INFINITE SPACE TO GROW TBH

I love time travel as a topic LMAO I keep daydreaming about ways to write time travel VC fic!!!!! I love it for Sheith fandom but it’s easier to incorporate because it’s sci-fi. But I think as a storytelling vehicle it always tries to tell us to stick with the devil we know. I think I’m getting carried away with my nerd topic and straying from your question LMAO but this is how I’m pondering.

I’d also ask if SANTINO would do things differently. If he’d leave Armand alone!!!!!!!! And I’ll stop here because, like I said, the space on the chart is infinite and you could talk all day because what if

Santino hadn’t acted like a cunt, what if Marius didn’t feel that TWMBK were threatened by cults, what if there had been even the slightest peace in the vampire community where Marius didn’t have to feel like the sole keeper, how different would his life have been, would he have even still needed Armand, etc etc etc etc

So yeah I think he’d do it again. :)

And I mean.

He turned Benji.

Sooooooooooooo idk if he learned a lesson about turning children. SHRUG.

Marius and Mael poisoned relationship 08/19/24

I really love how Marius & Mael's relationship has always just been completely poisoned by Marius not knowing what to do with his feelings and his rage, and the disconnect he feels even centuries later when he's trying to be the person he wants to be, where he tolerates Mael because he wants to be someone who can show forgiveness and empathy and patience even though they're emotions he's performing but that he doesn't actually feel, and the way he, over time, becomes desensitized to the blinding rage just enough to actually really tolerate him, but he's never meaningfully processed his feelings and they've never really had an honest conversation about it so all that resentment kinda healed wrong on the inside, like an ugly knot of scar tissue, so that when he watches Santino abduct Armand it's the thing he truly can't perform his way out of, he never gets over it, it's so triggering and so hurtful but just distanced enough from his own trauma that he can exercise his feelings about it, and doesn't have to forgive him, hasn't accidentally grown to like him, never has to accept any of Santino's redeemable qualities or atonement because the pain inside is so ugly and conceptual and malformed and he has even less control over it than he does about his feelings for Mael !

Marius and the Flowers and Depression 09/10/24

do you wanna talk about this part in *Marius and the Flowers* and how Marius is just as fucked up as everyone else?

> His left thumb hooked into an old-fashioned wooden palette, his pockets filled with tubes of acrylic paint, he used only one brush until it fell to pieces, covering the broken walls with brilliant pictures of the trees, the vines, the flowers he'd seen in Rio de Janeiro and the faces, yes, always the faces of the beautiful Brazilians he encountered everywhere, walking through the nighttime rain forest of Corcovado, or on the endless beaches of the city, or in the noisy garishly lighted nightclubs he frequented, collecting expressions, images, flashes of hair or shapely limbs **as he might have collected pebbles from the frothy margin of the ocean.**

Compared to how he explained Daniel's obsession with model cities to Thorne:

> "Have you ever seen one of our kind under such a spell?" Marius asked.
>
> Thorne shook his head, No, he had not. But he understood how such a thing could happen.
>
> "It occurs sometimes," said Marius. "The blood drinker becomes enthralled. **I remember centuries ago I heard the story of a blood drinker in a Southern land whose sole passion was for finding beautiful shells along the shore**, and this she did all night long until near morning. She did hunt and she did drink, but it was only to return to the shells, and once she looked at each, she threw it aside and went on searching. No one could distract her from it. Daniel is enthralled in the same way. He makes these small cities. He doesn't want to do anything else. It's as if the small cities have caught him. You might say I look after him."

Shells, pebbles, whatever!! sob.

Marius, Daniel, Armand and haunting relationships 09/17/24

buncha discourse a year or so back about how Marius and Daniel are both complete people without Armand (agreed) and that acknowledging the way Armand sort of haunts their relationship means we're taking agency away from Daniel as a whole person (vehemently disagree) and basically I just think, it's very short sighted to look at a relationship like Marius & Daniel's and NOT acknowledge the empty space of Armand between them.

Of course!!!!! We must acknowledge that fanworks and fandom are about transformative work and someone can easily devote time & energy to writing fics where Armand is never acknowledged once if that's what they want, but it's not what I want! It's not how I prefer to approach them!

I think there's something very salient about Armand's absence between them! I want us to spend time with it! I want to ask, when Daniel is at his worst, how much of this is Armand's fault? And I want to ask, when Marius nurses him through it, how much guilt does he feel? How might he look at Armand's behavior as a maker and wonder if he fucked up, if he did wrong by Armand by not being a better maker himself, if this could've been avoided?

It's such incredible source of trauma to look at–for Marius, I think it's a matter of "He behaves this way because I couldn't keep him safe, and I didn't rescue him, and I didn't rescue him because I couldn't reconcile how betrayed and triggered I felt by his cult, and if I had taken care of Santino and taken the cult seriously all along, this could have been avoided."

And for Daniel, we have to remember it's not JUST that he had a bad turning, that he's sensory-overloaded and bad at vampiring, but this is the nastiest breakup of his life! Especially considering that like, it's so much beyond being a marriage of sorts–TILL DEATH DO US PART except they'll never die. It must have hurt him so badly. And like, he was 20 when his life effectively ended, so it's entirely possible that this is his ONLY real bad breakup, and this was his only like actual adult relationship.

But even for him, I love thinking about how badly Armand hurt him, but as he gets to know Marius and understand the situation better, and understand Why Armand is Like That, there's such a potent space for forgiveness and empathy.

I like thinking about Daniel coming out of it slowly and allowing Marius to see his real personality, and all the space where they get to know each other and care for each other. It's not unlike the Devil's Minion–growing something where there was something else. With Armand it was fear and revulsion that become familiar and passionate. With Marius it starts with caretaking and confusion, and as he gets ahold of himself and things come into focus they can get to know each other as people.

idk I just really love this triangle in VC and the dynamics are really fascinating to me, and I'm happy that I've been poking at it and dissecting it for Vamptember, and I hope my haters of the past who told

me I was stupid for approaching this way know that they can simply keep scrolling and write their own fics if they don’t like it! :)

Louis and Armand autism and adhd (poison-and-the-rose) 12/13/24

So there is this theory out there of Armand being autistic, but interesting as it is I believe autism actually suits Louis better for several reasons

- disregard for grooming (disheveled hair and shapeless comfy clothes)
- picky with his food (but not in a white-wine-goes-with-fish-red-wine-goes-with-cheese Lestat sort of way)
- sky-high moral standards
- silent observer / likes to spend time on his own
- definitely considered alien by other vampires
- depression

(the sensory factor would be irrelevant here considering vampires' globally heightened perceptions)

On the other hand, Armand's wildly varied and short-termed obsessions, impulsivity and desperate need for love/validation might qualify for ADHD...

Anyway, this is just what I feel based on my experience as an autistic person living with an ADHDer but it's totally up for debate ^^

“It’s Always a Damnable Mistake” (Aunteat, apoposes) 08/18/25

aunteat:

At such times, the fierce old Child of Darkness wakes in me, the Coven Master beneath the Paris Cemetery who decreed when and how the Dark Blood should be given and, above all, to whom. But that old habit of authority is fraudulent and just a nuisance at best.

This is such an insane line that Armand really just passes over. Armand who vehemently refused to share the Dark Gift with Daniel because “it’s always a damnable mistake” already had a hand in making who knows how many vampires. Yeah it wasn’t his blood but it was because of his order that they were made. Makes you wonder how many of the fledglings that he was responsible for “creating” committed suicide or went insane or ended up dying by his own hand for him to him be just so against giving the gift to Daniel

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apoptoses:

This is SUCH a huge detail that I think gets overlooked! Armand isn't just thinking about his turning when he denies Daniel but also the failed vampires that Lestat learns of in TVL-

Wails rose all around us, but the most piercing supplications came from those other beings we had heard before, creatures somewhere deep in the earth. And I realized these were entombed vampires screaming, screaming for blood, and screaming for forgiveness and release, screaming even for the fires of hell. The sound was as unbearable as the stench. […] Confusion coming from them. And the howling in the walls seemed fainter as if the entombed were listening in spite of their pain.

Armand lived in this catacomb, surrounded by the screams of entombed fledglings. Ones he had allowed to be turned, who now suffered because of his permission and because of the coven rules he upheld. He listened to this noise *constantly* in the place he had to call home.

“*Before their loved ones they appeared to die," Armand said, "and with only a small infusion of our blood did they endure the terror of the coffin as they waited for us to come. Then and only then was the Dark Gift given, and they were sealed again in the grave after, until their thirst should give them the strength to break the narrow box and rise […] And pity the weak, those who couldn't break out. Those whose wails brought mortals the day after-for none would answer by night. We gave no mercy to them.”*

It's a fate that reflects the deaths of the monks he lived with, being entombed until you pass. But those monks chose to endure that as a holy act. These vampires endure it because they were turned with weak blood, or didn't have the stamina to escape their prison.

It's a shame we don't know more about the coven laws Armand was raised in and sent to uphold. Did he enforce them willingly? Had he let these vampires out and mercy killed them, would Allessandra have had to report him to some higher power? We don't know.

But we can imagine how this life must have affected him. And we can wonder if he carried on that same style of turning when he was leader of the Theater coven.

How could you see turning as a gift when your own turning resulted in your kidnapping, and when every vampire you saw turned since had to endure this awful test or die entombed? How could you know how to treat a fledgling with care when for centuries you helped box them up? And how could you turn someone you love knowing if they came out wrong, you'd be doomed to take their life in the end anyways?

It crushes me to think about how it makes sense that he saw Daniel's turning as a funeral and a great loss. Aside from his own transformation, the suffering of fledglings is all he'd ever known.

[monstersinthecosmos tags]

obsessed with this aspect of armand that yes i agree we need to acknowledge more it's weird bc i remember one time i wrote a meta about how i tend to DEFAULT on this vs relating it to marius in any way and the way it kinda like haunted me when i considered how marius factors into it LOL but no he saw this so many times over and over it's truly damnation

kaelio

Marius "no YOU'RE having a manic episode" de romanus

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kaelio

Marius "no YOU'RE having a depressive episode" de romanus

#no but we gotta talk about this more
#his neurotype and emotional damage is absolutely stunning

likecopperlikesalt asked:

My personal HC is that Marius would collapse into angry tears if anyone remembered his turniversary. One year someone screens "*Wicker Man*" & *"Midsommar*" and gets him a flower crown made of gas station roses and or leftover cemetary wreaths. Unfortunately that vampire is Santino. Marius has a panic attack and glares at Mael who cuddles with his pet rock unbothered while suggesting a Stonehenge documentary instead. Flustered, he opens the door, only to discovered two children Armand has mind called for a meal. "Why is Santa Claus wearing a night gown?, " he hears one think. Marius throws his crown at them and shitfaced Daniel tosses some old junk drawer drugs, old currency along with some peppermint candies from the 1970s, and thus the urban legend of drugs in candy continues again.

kaelio answered:

I think the worst thing that happens to Marius all year is those revisionist articles about druids that make them into gentle hippies and he's posted Comments online that cause CPUs to spontaneously explode

The toxic dynamic between Marius and his maker Teskhamen (alwynwitch) 10/06/25

Teskhamen wanted Marius to be kidnapped, raped into vampire existence and to save the vampire tribe/become the keeper of Akasha and Enkhil. Marius seems only to blame the druid priest Mael for this. Teskhamen seems fascinating and friendly to Marius, but I'm here to argue he is manipulative as well. I will analyze their reunion in *Prince Lestat*.

Marius thinks all those years (2000 years!!!) that Teskhamen is dead. His maker never let him know he actually survived the burning. Or offer any help with Those Who Must Be Kept. But then he approaches Marius. Why? Of course, you have the vampire crisis, Amel coming into consciousness and the changed structure of the Talamasca. But I think there is another layer: for the first time ever, Marius wants to sit this crisis out. He wants to hole up with Daniel (hunting together, watching movies) and wait till the storm is over.

But then his old maker is suddenly on his doorstep (again, after 2000 years of silence!!!). Because Teskhamen has chosen Marius for the task to carry the burden of vampire survival and he is here to remind Marius of his duty and the purpose he was made for. He does it with a lot of flattering and making sure no difficult questions are asked. Though soft-spoken and friendly, this creature is full of manipulation and bullshit.

This is how he approaches Marius:

> "Marius," he said. "**My beloved, my savior of long ago, my friend**." "I know you?' asked Marius politely. Even as he clapsed the hand he divined nothing but what the agreeable and open face reflected: friendship. No danger.

During the conversation he is constantly flattering Marius, saying he is his savior, that he never had known a being like him, he compares him to the sum of sunshine on marble floors. Just friendly? Or a tactic to de-escalate the situation so Marius will not be angry with him? And, even more importantly, will do what he wants him to do?

Marius is deeply emotional which shows how much this meeting means to him (so why did Teskhamen not get into touch earlier?):

> Something quickened in Marius, something he had not felt in a very long time. [...] But Marius was changed. Changed forever.

Teskhamen tells his story, which includes the founding of the Talamasca in 748. But the important questions are not asked. Why did Teskhamen never tell Marius he was still alive? Why did he not share his knowledge with him? Why didn't he check in with him to see how the task of taking care of Akasha and Enkhil was going? Why didn't he offer his help? See if Marius needed anything to carry the burden? Clearly, it would have meant a lot to Marius. (And remember how Marius abuses Armand in a similar way, letting him believe he was dead for centuries.)

Marius doesn't ask these questions. Instead, he seems to react exactly like Teskhamen is hoping for:

> Marius shuddered. He had so hoped somehow this would all pass without his active acknowledgment, that somehow his time of holding the survival of the tribe in his hands was past. **Had he not cared for the Mother and Father for two millennia? But he knew now he could not remain on the sidelines any longer.**

No, Marius, you only cared for Akasha and Enkhil for 2000 years, of course it is not enough. The vampire Teskhamen choose you to carry the burden and you cannot suddenly step out, take a break or retire. This is why your maker has shown up now. Marius probably doesn't notice, because of his vanity, need to be in control and savior complex (that Teskhamen is exploiting skillfully).

But Marius realizes:

> "And you're not one of us?" Marius asked. **"You are not coming yourself?"**

No, Marius, he is not coming. This is not an emotional reunion after which you two will fight the world together. He is here to remind you of your duty, the task he put you on 2000 years ago. Not to get involved himself. Especially Daniel is grilling him over this and see how Teskhamen responds:

> **"We ourselves made no decision."** "Because you didn't have to," said Daniel. "Isn't that so?" **Teskhamen shrugged.** He made a little gesture of agreement with his hands. [...] **"I don't know," said Teskhamen softly.** [...] Teskhamen put up his hands again **but this time defensively. "Daniel," he said gently. "I honestly do not know.**"

No, he doesn't know, he doesn't want to make difficult decisions, he is just here to make sure Marius will act and make the decisions for him and the whole vampire tribe. Then he pulls a last trick, telling Marius about the ghost of his old friend Raymond Gallant:

> Marius was astonished. He was almost moved to tears. "Oh yes, Marius, **you will see your beloved Raymond again,** I assure you," said Teskhamen. [...] "**But allow us our old caution, our old passivity, even now."** "I understand," said Marius. "You want us to come together as a tribe, the very same thing that Benji wants. **You want us to do the very best that we can in the face of this challenge - without your intervention.**"

Teskhamen uses emotional manipulation to get Marius in a soft spot to agree with everything he wants. Even though just before Teskhamen couldn't defend his position of passivity to Daniel. If Raymond means so much for Marius, why didn't he bring them into contact earlier? Why not right now? No, it seems like there is a condition for this meeting. Marius first has to play the savior once again.

> "You're a splendid being, Marius," said Teskhamen.

Of course, Marius is a splendid being, a good soldier, who will once again carry out your wishes and take on the burden of vampire existence. This is the reason why you made him a vampire and you will make sure he stays on this path. While you can just watch and observe.

levamplestat

"But return to your tale, if you will," he asked. "Why after the Queen was destroyed, and after the twins were gone, why then didn't you reveal your rage to the blood drinker Lestat, why didn't you take your vengeance? You'd been betrayed! And disaster had followed upon it."

"Because I wanted to love him still," said Marius, as though he had long known the answer, "and I wanted to be loved, and I could not forfeit my place as the wise and patient one, as I've said. Anger is too painful for me. Anger is too pathetic. I cannot bear it. I cannot act upon it."

Marius Family Headcanon Meta 10/15/25

this is pure headcanon and not proper meta but I've been contemplating Marius's family a lot for fanfic reasons and like. Knowing that he was doted upon as a child and like, the implication that his citizenship was murky but they loved him anyway, I've been wondering a lot about like. As a child if he asked questions about his mother, and what version of the story he was given as a kid. When did it begin to dawn on him that his privilege is protecting him. How badly did he drift from his adult siblings in a way that allowed him to just disappear?*

(*there's not really info about this but also backwards engineering how I think Marius & Daniel are just like each other, I wonder this about Daniel a lot, the fact that he just disappeared and if anyone was looking for him, it wasn't important enough for him to tell us in the book. Also looking at like the families of people who make good vampires and what do they have in common, etc etc. Don't quote me on this, it's just something I enjoy thinking about. I LIKE THINKING THAT HE OBSESSES OVER THE LAST TIME HE SAW EACH OF HIS FAMILY MEMBERS AND REGRETS IT LOL.)

But knowing Marius the way we do I wonder a lot about like, him held captive, sitting with his thoughts night after night, weighing everything he regrets, wondering what capture & captivity & enslavement had been like for his own mother, or even for the wet nurse who would've raised him, and I wonder if he ever had honest conversations about it with his family when he was old enough.

Like, it's the difference between a child asking "What did my mom look like? Could she sing? What was her favorite color? Was she nice? Did she like animals?" and the answers you'd give a child, vs "Did she resent us? Did she hate our father? Did she want me? Did you ever get the real story about how she was acquired?"

I wonder if he ever got around to those difficult conversations. If there was distance between them as adults or if he ever reached a point where he was afraid to hear the real answers.

It's just real awful stuff, and it makes sense that he became so affixed to Akasha. She's a mother but she's not, she's there but she's not. He interacts with her like once every 1,000 years and it sustains him because it's more than what he got from his other mother. "Mother" is conceptual to him. It's perfectly expected that you don't get any answers.

leslutdepointedulac asked:

🦣 - Favourite insane detail about Marius!

oh god dude idk how to choose LOL

but !!! If I just pick something off the top of my head that comes to me quickly.

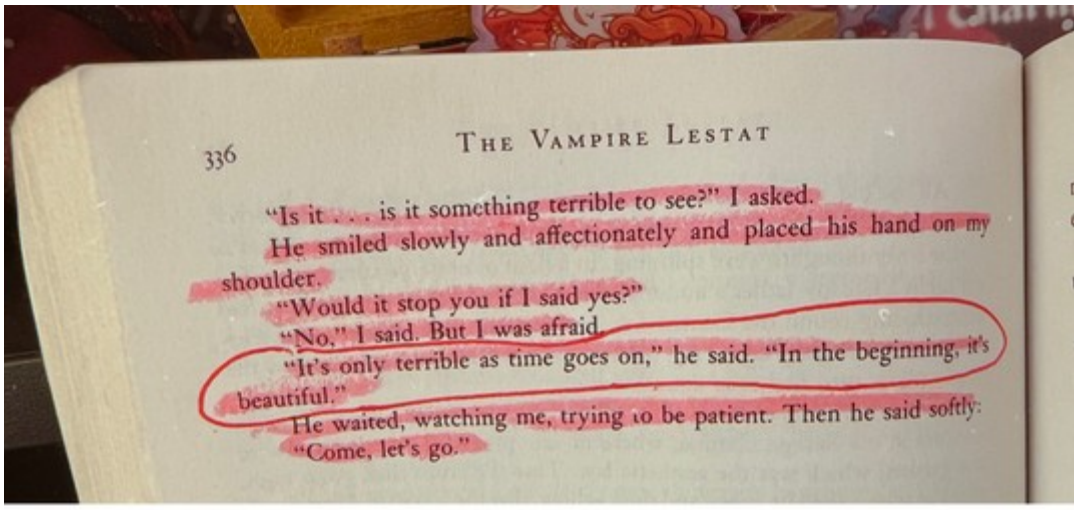
I love that he's sort of VAMPIRE DYSPHORIC in a way that the other characters don't always talk about? Like, Lestat does in his own way, and even like, is so freaked out and body horror'd and traumatized by QOTD that he immediately tries to kill himself lol. But we can file that under "Lestat is actually just Mini-Marius" because there's a lot of stuff we take for granted in the series that LESTAT does or that LESTAT believes, when in fact Marius is like, maybe the only person who ever affirms it?

Like baby boy do you think this is normal or did Other Blonde Traumatized Guy validate you? "Yes of course it's very normal to hibernate and DIE when you're a vampire, I do it all the time." OKAY GRANDPA. (Narrator voice: No one else does this.)

But like in terms of a self-loathing vampire, I just think Marius is your guy. He's constantly horrified when he has vampire puberty and gains new powers. He works hard to stay connecting to his physicality and prefers to be tactile. (""A singer can shatter a glass with the proper high note," he said, "but the simplest way for anyone to break a glass is simply to drop it on the floor."")

Also like every few centuries the way he's like "Wow it's sure fucking horrifying that I look more and more like The Parents!"

(Thinking about this part OH MY GOD :( )



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"Is it . . . is it something terrible to see?" I asked.

He smiled slowly and affectionately and placed his hand on my shoulder.

"Would it stop you if I said yes?"

"No," I said. But I was afraid.

"It's only terrible as time goes on," he said. "In the beginning, it's beautiful."

He waited, watching me, trying to be patient. Then he said softly: "Come, let's go."

IT’S ONLY TERRIBLE AS TIME GOES ON!!!!!!! IN THE BEGINNING IT’S BEAUTIFUL!!!!!!!

And like!!!!!!!!!!

The way he’s just. So avoidant of anger and violence, and how terrible it is that it’s his nature. LIKE IN PANDORA WHEN HE SAYS, IT HAS NO MORALS, **IT THIRSTS**. (I have to lie down.) Like idk I think we give Louis a lot of credit as the Self Loathing Vampire Archetype because he had so much trouble adjusting lmao but MARIUS IS RIGHT THERE!!!!!!!!

Without even getting into all the baggage around “I have lived lies” wrt his anger issues, the way it also manifests as like, nights he misses Pandora so bad he gluts himself until he can’t even drink anymore but he’s just out there bingeing and killing folks anyway.

A fierce anger, the very anger I fight now, welled up in me, and it made me weak, as I’ve already told you. I couldn’t do what I had to do - bring her back to me. ***And sometimes my loneliness pushed me to take three and four victims in a night, until I was spilling blood I couldn’t drink.***

And he’s just so ASHAMED of this!!!!!!!!!

God !!!!!!!!! I just.

I COULD GO ON IDK. I have a work meeting so I’ll stop. But!!!!!!!!!

Love a tortured king who is held prisoner by his immortality because he’s so powerful that he doesn’t know if he can even kill himself anymore and he’s too scared to try.

[tags]

marius de romanus vampire chronicles deep ass thoughts about vampires trauma hole theory idk if this is an insane detail because to me it feels like a pretty load bearing part of him as a character LMAO but like in the way that no one in this fandom gives a shit about who he is as a person and doesn't TALK ABOUT STUFF LIKE THIS like sorry the whole tag is just about how he's BORING i guess? whatever!

whumplent

always chewing on characters who would Never do anything as vulnerable as admit what happened but the signs are all there. stark, shiny scars they brush off concern for. pains that crop up at strange times. obsessive habits they refuse to break and aversions they won't explain. bags under their eyes and a thin face, no matter how competent they are at whatever task is set before them. a worn cog still turns. even if everyone can see the damage, it doesn't need to draw attention. really.

#this is all the blorben tbh but also
#do you ever think about marius having to live with long hair for eternity
#that he never wanted!
#unless he did for gender reasons but thats another convo
#do you think he had a soft dad bod from eating snacks in a little hut for months and months
#:) #anyway ! #marius de romanus #trauma hole theory

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